PASTORAL CARE IN THE HOSPITAL: MINISTRY OF PRESENCE FOR THE NURSES TO PREVENT BURNOUT AND INCREASE RESILIENCE

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ABSTRACT

PASTORAL CARE IN THE HOSPITAL: MINISTRY OF PRESENCE
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AND INCREASE RESILIENCE

by
Mariya K. Marton
United Theological Seminary, 2019

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The context for this project is the Southview Medical Center, of Centerville, Ohio. The purpose of this project is to create and implement a plan of coaching and support for the nurses. The hypothesis is that if nurses are supported and coached, they, in turn, will be able to care for and provide better quality care for the patients. A qualitative methodology will include two surveys, interviews, and personal discussions with the nurses. The data should demonstrate that if a chaplain provides a coaching process and personal care for the nurses, the nurses would facilitate better care for the patients.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I would like to thank the Almighty God for His love and faithfulness. I would like to thank my mentor Duane Anders for all his support, encouragement, prayers, and for sharing his expertise. Thank you also to my faculty consultant Presian Burroughs for her time, advice, and scholarly editing. Thanks to my professional associate Jeba Moses, for his wisdom, knowledge, and for his time in reviewing and editing the document. Thanks to my peer group for their friendship, support, prayers, and encouragement. Thanks to my Southview Medical Center context associates, Danielle and Angie, for their support, suggestions, and feedback. Thanks to my parents for their support, and to my mother who has fallen asleep in Jesus after battling cancer in 2015. She was my strong support who believed in me and always prayed for me. She would always be so encouraging and held our family in the circle of peace. I'm looking forward to meeting you at the resurrection of the righteous!

Last but not least, I thank my husband, Edward, for his loving, amazing support. Always inspiring me to go forward. Praying with me and for me, guiding me throughout this project, helping me with the editing, and directing me in this process on how to succeed. And to my children, Levi and Leyla, for their patience, support, and encouraging words that fill my heart with love and joy.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work first to my wonderful and loving husband, Edward, for his uplifting and encouraging words in helping me in my research and studies. His strong faith in God has inspired me to keep strong and be faithful in my journey. His endless support, love, and kindness have been such a blessing in my life. His encouraging words have always uplifted and inspired me throughout my ministry. Thank you my love for your faithful prayers and for being a constant source of inspiration and knowledge. You have been such a blessing in my life.

Also, I dedicate this book to our precious children, Levi and Leyla, who were so patient and loving throughout the whole process of this project. Their inspiration, love, and laughter have made our lives brighter and perfect in every way. You are the joy of our lives!

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ABBREVIATIONS

KHN	Kettering Health Network
SV	Southview Medical Center

INTRODUCTION

In my ministry context I focus on the nurses, who are the caretakers for the patients and the families in the hospital. I sense that there is a great need to support the nurses, for they carry heavy burdens, and have such a full, stress-filled workload. Therefore, it is my passion to explore ways in how to support and care for the nurses better, seeing where the need is greater and to help, guide, and coach them throughout the day with support, hoping to help the nurses be more effective in the work place.

To build the foundation of this project, chapter one will first concentrate on the context of the Southview Medical Center where the project takes place. I will also share my own personal journey on how God has brought me to serve in this hospital. Then, I will share how God has brought both the hospital and myself together to concentrate on caring for the nurses.

In chapter two, for the biblical foundation, we will look at the lives of Jethro and Moses. Jethro observed Moses as Moses ministered to the Israelites and gave helpful suggestions to Moses so that Moses would not burn out from serving in the ministry. This biblical foundation is helpful in observing nurses and caring for them so that they would not burn out as they serve their patients.

In chapter three, we will look at the life of Clara Barton and how she needed caring individuals to support her and she lived a life of service for others. In chapter four, we will look at the theology of soul care. We will first see that the Trinity has supported

each other and created a universe that they care for. In turn we were created to support and care for one another. In chapter five we will look at how youth and children's ministry is successful when ministers support and show care for parents that are raising children for the kingdom of God.

In chapter six we will delve into the project of caring for the nurses. There is the need for special attention to nurses, as the shortage of nurses is acute, partly because of nurses being overworked and are stressed in their work place because of the workload they carry. Nurses go through a lot of challenges on a day-to-day basis, they serve and care for the sick, at times they see those they care for pass away instead of being healed. Truly in their care for the sick, nurses do make a difference and impact many lives. They not only provide care for the sick but at times they also get sick and go through the agony of having to fight off diseases they might pick up in the same hospital they serve in. They serve many individuals with different emotional needs and they are there for everyone under their care. The hearts of many of the nurses are full of compassion, because they signed up to be nurses to be involved in the ministry of care for others. Nurses always work in a fast pace, they work in a demanding environment, and therefore they need to be cared for more intentionally because they carry such a high stress level workload. Another challenge for nurses is the continual struggle with transitioning of new staff or shortage of staff and they have to learn how to cope through these personnel changes.

Because of all these challenges that nurses face, the purpose of this project is to focus on the nurses and provide intentional ministry of presence, offer coaching through one-on-one discussions, assisting them with support, as well as care for them in a way where their stress level may be reduced. The goal is to listen and care so that as they

share their burdens with the chaplain, the nurses may find their load lighter and easier to carry. It is helpful to be available for them and let them know that there is a safe and confidential place that is welcoming for sharing and discussions. The ministry of presence and self-care packages would be provided weekly and would include the following some of the following items:

- Food/snacks
- Cart with goodies
- Interactive ruffle guessing games (basket winner)
- Tickets to the movies or concerts
- Encouraging words of hope
- Stress reducing conversations
- Wellness back/neck warmers for pain relief
- Huddle for prayer on Thursdays called "one min with Mariya"

All these will be provided for them on a regular basis so they can take time for themselves to relax and have moments of relief, as well as provide gift cards so that they may have time for their families. This will help the nurses feel supported by the chaplain and to have peace at home and return to work the next day rejuvenated. As caretakers are cared for in these described ways, it will increase the resilience of stressors and will enhance the quality of care for the patients.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

Introduction

In this chapter I provide the synergy between the context of Southview Medical Center (SV) in Centerville, Ohio and my calling as a chaplain. It is my privilege to serve at the SV, both the patients and the staff. Looking back on my life, I have received my passion for God from my father and my passion for service from my mother. I have chosen to concentrate on my thesis on caring for the nurses and staff of SV because I have seen how hard they work and how stressful their service can be. Growing up I saw how my mother loved and cared for many people that were in poverty and overburdened. And now I have the privilege to follow in my mother's footsteps by caring for the amazing caregivers of SV.

In this chapter I offer the history of the Southview Medical Center. Then, I consider the current context of SV. Then, I will share parts of my spiritual autobiography that deal with my calling to ministry and service. And finally, conclude with how at this time of my life, the context of SV and my spiritual journey intersect in service for the staff there.

Context

To fully understand the history of Southview Medical Center, one must look into the history of Grandview Hospital in Dayton and the Kettering Health Network (KHN). For it was the Grandview Hospital that began the SV; therefore SV is like the offspring of the Grandview Hospital. And both the Grandview Hospital and Southview Medical Center currently are under the KHN umbrella.

First, an overview historical background of Grandview Hospital and how Grandview Hospital began SV. Second, the history of the KHN, then how SV joined the KHN. Third, I will continue with the geographic and demographic description of the city of Centerville, Ohio, the city that SV is located in. Lastly, I will provide further details of the present condition and description of the hospital.

"The story of Grandview Hospital actually starts in 1921 in Warren County."[1] Dr. Heber Dill and Dr. Frank Dilatush, who as brothers-in-law, began their practice in Lebanon, Ohio. They eventually opened up a small hospital above a drug store in Lebanon. After some time Dr. Gravett invited Dr. Dilatush and Dr. Dill to join him in practicing in Dayton, Ohio. In 1926, "they all joined together and formed the Miami Clinic at 325 West Second Street in Dayton, Ohio."[2]

Around that time, Dr. Emerson Early started a small hospital. His hospital was located on North Main street and in that hospital some of the osteopathic physicians began to deliver babies and also do tonsillectomies. "It seemed certain this is one of the major stimuli for what happens next in the story of Grandview Hospital, for at this time

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[1] Geoff Williams, *Patients & Patience: Celebrating the History of Grandview Hospital* (Wilmington, OH: Orange Frazer Press, 2006), xiv.

[2] Williams, xv.

Dill, Dilatush, and Dobeleit offered the hospital to the osteopathic physicians in the city. In 1940 approximately forty osteopathic physicians working in Dayton, Ohio formed a hospital corporation and purchased the hospital and it became a nonprofit organization."[3]

On December 1, 1941, this group of forty osteopathic physicians started a fundraising project to build a new osteopathic hospital in Dayton, Ohio. Land was purchased for $13,000 where Grandview Hospital is located today. Since World War II began December 7, 1941, the construction on Grandview Hospital was put on hold until 1946. "In March 1947 on a Sunday afternoon around 4:00 p.m. the first patients were moved from the Second Street Hospital to the Grand Avenue facility."[4]

Grandview Hospital starting growing from its very inception. When the hospital opened, it had forty beds for patients. Within the first year, construction continued on the Grandview Hospital building and added twenty-two more beds, bringing the total number of beds to sixty-two. In 1949 the basement was remodeled and twenty-eight more beds were added, bringing the total to ninety beds. As the hospital continued to grow, in 1952 another building was added in front of the original building and the two buildings were connected. With the new construction, they added eighty beds, bringing the total to 170 beds. "In 1957 an obstetrical wing was added to house the gynecological surgery and the obstetrical service which was growing by leaps and bounds. This structure was a long two story building connected to the west side of the existing hospital. This structure brought the total number of beds to 225."[5] In 1962 two more stories were added to the 1952 addition and now the total number of beds for the hospital went up to 301. Then in

[3] Williams, xv.

[4] Williams, xv.

[5] Williams, xvi.

1970 there was a large addition to the east part of the hospital, with an added garage built in 1971 that made the Grandview hospital the largest osteopathic hospital in the United States of America. The 1970 addition "included the first true intensive care unit, a new recovery room, a complete new surgical unit, and a new emergency room, as well as sixty new beds."[6] Also, this new addition in 1970 brought the total number of beds to more than 450 beds for the hospital.

The story of SV hospital begins after Grandview became the largest osteopathic hospital in America. It was in 1978, that the leaders of Grandview decided to build and open an ambulatory care just south of Dayton off of Highway 725. They chose to build the 60,000 square foot facility, the Ambulatory Care Center, on a fifty acre site just a couple of minutes from the Dayton Mall.[7] "This was a new concept in medicine and was touted as a hospital without beds."[8] But the concept of a hospital without beds did not last long, because in 1982 they expanded a new wing on the north side of the Ambulatory Care Center, and in 1983 added fifty six beds, fifty med-surg beds and six intensive care unit beds from Grandview Hospital and placed them to the Ambulatory Care Center, which would be known as Southview hospital. What started as the Ambulatory Care Center, a hospital with no beds, became Southview hospital with beds.

Things became really challenging for the Grandview and Southview hospitals in the 1990s. In the mid 1990s, "United Healthcare dropped the bomb that they were renewing contracts with four of the five hospitals in Dayton—and Grandview wasn't one

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[6] Williams, xvi.

[7] Williams, 127.

[8] Williams, 127.

of them."[9] It seems that United Healthcare did all it could to force Grandview and Southview to close. "The insurance industry was continuing its prejudices against the osteopathic profession."[10] Grandview Hospital took the insurance company United Healthcare to court and they came to an agreement and settled with United Healthcare. The settlement stated that even though United Health would not renew their contract with Grandview, they would at least compensate the hospital with the same average prices that they had for the hospitals that were in contract with them. That is really all Grandview wanted out of the settlement. Though that stopped the bleeding for a while, it turned out that United Health was paying the doctors more money if they would start referring their patients to other hospitals.

The president of Grandview realized that he needed to do something because staff were unhappy, doctors were referring patients to go elsewhere, and United Health was doing all it could to have Grandview close down. At around this time in 1996, Richard Minor, the president of Grandview and Frank Perez, the president of Kettering Medical Center created an allegiance. The allegiance was for the purpose of purchasing medical supplies together in order to receive them at lower prices. But this friendship became valuable. Because when Minor realized the challenges that Grandview was facing, he looked at companies that were interested in buying Grandview. Miami Valley Hospital wanted to buy Grandview, but Minor realized that just like the other venture capitalist firms that wanted to buy Grandview, Miami Valley Hospital, "couldn't guarantee that Grandview would continue as an osteopathic institution."[11]

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[9] Williams, 149.

[10] Williams, 149.

[11] Williams, 152.

Since Grandview Hospital had a good relationship with the Kettering Medical Center, Minor approached Perez regarding the possibility of joining the hospitals. And in 1999 Grandview and Southview hospitals joined the Kettering Medical Center Network, today it is just known as the Kettering Health Network. The biggest concern for Minor was that "Kettering would maintain Grandview's osteopathic principles, keep its jobs and make it a bigger, better, hospital…"[12] On June 29, 1999, when Grandview and Southview joined the Kettering Medical Center, Minor retired after being the president and CEO of Grandview and Southview for twenty-six years. Roy G. Chew, Ph.D. became the new president of Grandview Medical Center.[13]

It was at this time that Minor noted, "Kettering Medical Center is very prestigious, and whether the staff at Grandview wants to admit it or not, the moment we joined them, we became part of that prestige. We married into that prestige immediately, and that was a good thing."[14] With the history of Grandview and Southview concluded, we turn to the attention of the prestigious Kettering Medical Center and its amazing history.

The History of the Kettering Medical Center

KHN began as Kettering Medical Center. The Kettering Medical Center originated with the vision and dream of Charles and Virginia Kettering. The Ketterings' dream of starting a hospital after they experienced a crisis in the suburbs of Chicago. The crisis of the polio epidemic came over many and effected the small community where

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[12] Williams, 154.

[13] Harold L. Lee and Anne E. Biswas, *The Defining Decade* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2005), 123.

[14] Williams, 156.

Charles and Virginia resided. Many cases of polio took place and no cure was found at the time. Their neighbor's child was infected by the disease and had to be sent away to a near-by city hospital to receive health care. The Kettering family determined at that point to help the community through the crisis. Charles and Virginia approached the local Hinsdale Hospital and the Sanitarium that was run by the Seventh-day Adventist church and offered sponsorship in funding the polio crisis, to care for the children in great need. Virginia determined to volunteer her time and showed great compassion for the children in the community. And Charles was also involved in the community with well-known businesses to improve the hospital's development.[15]

The Kettering family saw and experienced growth in the organization and absorbed the Adventist philosophy of health care. They saw how the staff interacted with the patients and how compassion was offered for the patients. They were impressed with the loving care that was provided and the quality in the healing of its ministry. Most importantly they saw how the Adventist community truly cared and provided holistic approach to patients; meeting the emotional, social and spiritual needs that often led to the overall healing process.[16]

The Seventh-day Adventist teaching regarding health care was established namely from the denominations early pioneer, Ellen G. White. She wrote about the correlation between physical, emotional, and spiritual health in self-care and how the church's mission should be about helping everyone in learning to live healthy. Especially by taking proper care of our bodies through exercise, proper nutrition, sanitation, fresh air, pure water, and sunshine. This belief regarding health was taken lightly in Ellen White's

[15] Lee and Biswas, 7.

[16] Lee and Biswas, 7.

time, however, it has been taken into great account and now many Seventh-day Adventist hospitals around the country are practicing her ideas.

The Ketterings were not members of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination but they had lasting impressions of what they have seen at the Hinsdale Hospital. And when the time came "less then a decade later, when it came time to make important decisions about a new hospital in their family's hometown, the Ketterings knew without a doubt that is should reflect the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of care."[17]

The dream of starting a hospital became a reality shortly after Charles Kettering passed away. Virginia Kettering and her son, Eugene approached the Seventh-day Adventist Church around 1958 to partner in building a Christian hospital in the Dayton area. Because of the Ketterings witness of the Seventh-day Adventist values and believes, the high quality and the compassionate care that was offered in the Hinsdale facility, they knew they desired to do something similar.[18] The Kettering couple were impressed and planned to have such a hospital in Kettering, Ohio and to be operated by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. After much planning with the Kettering community leaders, there was a one hundred bed hospital opened in Kettering, Ohio, as the Kettering Medical Center. The groundbreaking took place on July 7, 1961 on the twenty-two acre wooded land that the Ketterings had donated for the new hospital. The new official dedication of Charles F. Kettering Memorial Hospital took place in February 14, 1964.[19] Eugene Kettering also donated a few acres for a church to be built across from the hospital. With the help of

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[17] Lee and Biswas, 8.

[18] Lee and Biswas, 10, 11.

[19] Lee and Biswas, 116.

kind residents and great leaders, the organization grew and over time other hospitals were built or added under KHN umbrella.[20]

Today KHN has eight hospitals within its Network and a ninth hospital currently being built. The eight hospitals are listed below:

- Fort Hamilton Hospital: 630 Eaton Ave., Hamilton, OH 45013. Fort Hamilton Hospital opened in 1929 and joined the Kettering Health Network in 2010.[21]
- Grandview Medical Center: 405 W. Grand Ave., Dayton, OH 45404. As stated earlier, it was opened in 1926 and joined what is today known as the Kettering Health Network in 1999.
- Greene Memorial Hospital: 1141 N. Monroe Dr., Xenia, OH 45385. Greene Memorial Hospital opened in 1950 and joined the Kettering Health Network in 2008.
- Kettering Behavioral Medicine Center: 5348 Lamme Rd., Dayton, OH 45439.
- Kettering Medical Center: 3535 Southern Blvd., Kettering, OH 45429. As stated earlier, the Kettering Medical Center opened in 1964.
- Indu and Raj Soin Medical Center: 3535 Pentagon Blvd., Beavercreek, OH 45431. This is one of the newest hospitals that the Kettering Health Network built and opened in 2012.

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[20] Lee and Biswas, 12,13.

[21] "Fort Hamilton joins Kettering Health Network," Cincinnati Business Courier, accessed March 2, 2018, http://www.bizjouranls.com/cincinnati/stories/2010/07/12/daily16.html.

- Southview Medical Center: 1997 Miamisburg-Centerville Rd., Centerville, OH 45459. As stated earlier, Southview opened in 1978.
- Sycamore Medical Center: 4000 Miamisburg-Centerville Rd., Miamisburg, OH 45342. Sycamore was also built in 1978.
- Troy Hospital is being built currently at 600 W. Main Street, Troy, OH 45373.[22]

Currently KHN with its eight hospitals, has over 12,000 employees and 2,100 physicians, as well as over 120 outpatient facilities.[23] KHN continues to build, grow, and serve the health and spiritual needs of the greater Dayton area. Today SV has one hundred and sixteen beds, serving Centerville, Ohio.

Geographic Descriptions

Southview Medical Center is located the city of Centerville, in Montgomery County, Ohio, United States. The city of Centerville has a population of 23,899 as of 2016. Approximately 12,964, or fifty four percent are females and approximately 10,935 or forty-six percent are males. The median age is forty-eight years of age, the median age for males is 46.5 and for females it is 49.4. The ethnicity of Centerville is six percent Black or African American, three and a half percent Asian, and just a little over eighty-seven percent Caucasian, with just a little half percent of other ethnicities.[24]

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[22] "Hospitals," Kettering Health Network, accessed March 2, 2018, http://www.ketteringhealth.org.

[23] Kettering Health Network, "Hospitals."

[24] "Centerville Community Facts," United States Census Bureau, accessed March 2, 2018, https://factfinder.censu.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml.

The Centerville city family medium income of household is $54,892. Seven and a half percent of households had income below 15,000 a year and five and a half percent had income over 150,000 or more. [25] According to the U.S Census Bureau the median income for a full-time year-round worker by gender are as follows; male income is about $52,331 and female income is $34,881. There are various income sources for different households as follows; total earnings are seventy-nine percent, social security income is twenty-nine percent, retirement income is twenty-five percent, supplemental security income is one and a half percent and cash public income is just last than one percent. [26]

The statistics educationally for the city of Centerville has been the following: twenty percent of people living in Centerville over 25 years over had a high school diploma or equivalency. Twenty eight percent had a bachelor's degree, thirteen percent completed a graduate degree or a professional degree and close to eight percent completed an associate degree and twenty-two percent had completed some college or no degree.

As stated earlier, Southview Medical Center is located south of Dayton Ohio, just off highway 675 and close to the Dayton Mall. This location makes it accessible and also close to an area that is very popular with stores and restaurants. SV served the south Dayton, Ohio suburbs such as Centerville, Kettering, West Carrollton, Moraine, Miamisburg, Springboro, Bellbrook, and Waynesville. Not only is SV a full service hospital, but with its adjacent medical buildings is offers the following specialty services: Joslin Diabetes Center, Neurology, Orthopedics, Cardiology, MRI, Sports medicine, and

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[25] United States Census Bureau, "Centerville Community Facts."

[26] United States Census Bureau, "Centerville Community Facts."

Physical Therapy.[27] The following are some awards that SV has received after it joined the KHN:

- January, 2003 Grandview and Southview are named the best in the region for heart failure treatment.
- January 2003 Grandview and Southview are awarded the Health Grades Specialty Excellence award for pulmonary care and named best in the region for treatment of community acquired pneumonia.
- January 2004 Grandview and Southview awarded the HealthGrades Specialty Excellence award for pulmonary care and five-star ratings in nine clinical categories. Named best in the region for treatment of community acquired pneumonia.[28]
- In 2015 Southview Medical Center received the Women's Choice Award.
- And for 2015, 2016 Grandview and Southview received the U.S. News And World Report Best Regional Hospital award for pulmonology.

Present Ministry

Today the president of Southview Medical Center is Richard Manchur. Richard Manchur is the son of Fred Manchur who is the CEO of the Kettering Health Network. I've had the privilege to be the chaplain of Southview for about a year now. I began my ministry as a chaplain going through the spiritual care residency program at the Kettering Medical Center. After I finished the residency in chaplaincy, KHN hired me to be the

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[27] "Southview Medical Center," Kettering Health Network, accessed March 2, 2018, http://www.ketteringhealth.org.

[28] Lee and Biswas, 142, 143.

chaplain of the Indu and Raj Soin Medical Center. I served as a chaplain at the Indu and Raj Soin Medical Center for two years when I transferred over to the SV.

I had the privilege to serve in the spiritual care department of KHN in three of the eight hospitals. Currently I enjoy serving as the chaplain at the Southview Medical Center. The staff at SV has a family feel to it. Staff realize that we work together and serve together those that are in need. I have noticed that the nurses, doctors, and staff at the SV work very hard.

One of my passions is not only to pray with and support the patients that come through Southview Medical Center. But I truly care about the nurses, doctors, administrators, and other staff that work so hard to serve the patients. And so I spend some of my time praying with, encouraging, and supporting the staff as they serve the patients. My prayer is that together with the staff of SV, we may continue to be a blessing to the suburbs of the south side of Dayton and that the Lord may be glorified and we strive to be a blessing to those around us.

Ministry Journey

I was born on September 29, 1979 in Mejirechie, Ukraine. Ukraine was under the leadership of the Soviet Union, and led by Leonin Brezhev. And in 1991 it became an independent country called Ukraine. As a child, I grew in great poverty and seeing the many struggles that my parents had to go through just to make it daily is an experience that I will never forget. I remember hearing my parents often talk about the lack of food for the family, and some days, if we were lucky, we ate potatoes with onions from the garden. There were times, as young children, that we needed to travel to far away states

for months and work in the farm fields or watch other people's flocks so we could make money for bread and milk.

At other times I would be sent to my relatives' home for the summer to watch their cows, so we can have some oil and grain for bread. During the holidays, mom would walk for miles to exchange eggs for milk so she can bake a delicious treat for the festivities. Growing up in Ukraine was hard but our God always provided and it seems we always had some food to eat. Though getting food seldom came easy, I remember standing in line for two to three hours at a time, being pushed and shoved just to walk away with a loaf of bread or milk. And my mom would work hard in the fields from sun up to sundown to make sure she could provide food for the whole family.

We were seven siblings, six girls and one boy. Two of our siblings past away due to health problems and because of the major poverty we lived in. I was the fourth of seven children. Each one of us from a young age had many chores in the house and on the farm and we all knew what our duties were. My father was sick most of his life and therefore he could not work physically, leaving my mom with having to work hard to provide for the family and us having to care for the house.

I remember seeing my mother working hard and struggling alone to provide for our family. I have come to the conclusion that my mother was a very strong woman, a provider, hard worker, caretaker to my dad, as well as one who raised us. I remembered seeing her struggle and trying to hide her tears of grief over the passing of my little sister. She was wounded deeply by the loss of her baby and she faced many hardships even after the loss.

I have a few memories growing up in Ukraine. I feel that my childhood experiences were unique compared to many children who grow up in what many would consider normal circumstances. Joyful times for us were when we could enjoy a few slices of bread with sour cream and sugar on top as a delicious treat. One New Year's Day was a treat for me personally because that's when I got one of my first dolls. I also remember playing in the streets with many neighborhood children sledding, ice-skating, and enjoying nature. Times were hard yet it felt safe to go into the village in the morning and returning home at night.

With my dad's ongoing illness, many times we were called to his bedside so that he would say goodbye to us, thinking he would die soon. Mom would pray for hours on her knees for him to get better, especially when she saw his black kidneys though his skin. It was hard to see my dad struggle with his health for years. It was hard seeing him shed tears because he could not provide for him family. I believe that the hardest part for my dad was to see my mom, his wife have to care for him and provide for the family. My dad visited many doctors, did many tests, and it was frustrating for him that none of the doctors could diagnose why he was so sick. But my dad tried hard to at least encourage us and teach us life skills.

One summer when his health was a little better he started building an underground basement that was used as a refrigeration system for storing cans and other goods. In the middle of this building project he got ill again, because of heavy pains he could not lift anything, not even a cup of water. Since my brother was in the army at the time, all of us daughters had to step up to finish this large project. Every morning he would instruct us on how to pour out cement and dig holes that were needed for the

underground basement. It was a few months of difficult work with very little time left for fun and leisure. But at the end of the project we really enjoyed the results because this underground refrigeration system would also have a summer room above it for some fun and relaxation.

I remember being six years old and how proud my dad was that he could teach me how to read. When visitors came over to see him, my dad would proudly ask me to read to our guests a few encouraging verses from the Bible. My dad was good about encouraging me by telling me how proud he was of me and I believe that's what motivated me to do my chores so willingly. Though my dad could not work due to his illness, he made sure that he daily gathered the family for devotions. He took the time and taught us poems and Bible verses so we could say them at church during worship services. We did not have much but we had each other and Christ was in the center of our family. And no matter what things we were struggling with, we would gather together every night, after we would finish our chores and sit by the fireplace, socialize and talk, reflecting on the events of the day.

My mother, with all the challenges she faced daily, also had to deal with the health challenges that I began to have at around the age of six. I had to stay in the hospital numerous times for multiple surgeries. I remember one time how my mother had to leave me behind in a big city hospital, because she had no choice but to go back home and provide for the family. I was standing in my hospital room by the window, waving to my mother, as she disappeared in the distance. Yet, I was comforted with the thought that she would come back and bring some delicious goodies, and therefore, I kept waiting and watching through the window day by day for my mom's return.

When we were not doing our chores, we would play out in nature and by the river around our house. We did lot of fishing and picking fruits. Parents always warned us not to get into the deep water and carefully cross the bridges, especially when it flooded due to heavy rains. The river had areas where it was deep enough for the strong current to take a person away in any given time. One day, all of us children went swimming after a big storm, we tested the water with long sticks to see how deep the river was and it didn't seem to be too dangerous to swim in it. I was having fun swimming and a few minutes later felt a current taking me away from everyone. All this happened so suddenly, as I panicked, I could not scream for help, and started going under the deep water; fortunately a young person not far from me grabbed me by the hand and was able to save me. In some ways I think that I'm a "miracle child" because there were many times in my life where I was close to dying due to health issues or events mentioned earlier. Many individuals did not think that I would make it, but through God's grace and mercy, I'm still here today serving the Lord.

I was born into a Seventh–day Adventist Christian home and we attended church faithfully every weekend. From a young age I was involved in church mostly by singing. I loved going to church, the youth group was strong, and it was fun fellowshipping with friends and family. My dad was an elder of the church, he taught Sabbath school (similar to Sunday School), while my mother was a deaconess involved in helping the grieving and those in need in the community. I remember one day, where mother had to come in and served in a situation that no one wanted to serve in. An elderly lady was killed in a house fire and my mom went in, cleaned the house and made the funeral arrangements

for that lady. Watching my mom faithfully and humbly cleaning that elderly lady's house, led me to want to help, but I was too young to help.

I learned to be strong and work hard at a young age in order to survive in a poor, communist country. Growing up, my faith in God brought me great hope and I would always try to make great efforts to help others around me, by taking food to those who were less fortunate than us. At times, I would save my lunch money and take it to those that I knew needed it more than me. When I went to school, I would plan whom I would visit that afternoon on the way home and take some bread to them or help them in the garden. The desire in my heart was always to help and serve, this desire was planted in my heart by my parents.

One day after school, I stopped by a widow's house to bring her a loaf of bread and wash her dishes. And when I got to her house she did not answer the door so I opened the door and there she was lying in the room, not moving at all. Sure enough she was dead, someone in the village closed her chimney so she would die, because she was accepting help from the Christians in the community. That was a frightening experience for me because I realized how much people needed Jesus in their lives and how fragile life really was. But my father encouraged me to continue helping our neighbors and to even start sharing Christian material with those we were helping.

My father was the most spiritual influence in my early childhood and he was always there when I had questions from the Bible. My mother on the other hand was the hard worker providing for the family by being out working on the fields from sunrise to sunset. Getting my education in a communist country was challenging because everyone

would make fun of us for believing in God. However that did not stop us from being faithful Christians.

In 1994 our family moved to the United States and we settled in California. Our move to the new country brought happiness to our family because we knew that our lives would change and that as young people we would have a bright future. Back in Ukraine it was impossible for a Christian to serve God and advance in education to have a good career. We knew about the religious freedom that was practiced here in America and we were very excited that we would have a better life. Most importantly we hoped that the doctors in America would finally figure out what was wrong with dad. Also we were happy that our mom would not have to work so hard plowing the fields by hand in order to provide for the family.

Moving to America was a bitter sweet experience because we left behind family and friends, uncles and aunts, cousins, and the culture we grew up in. We would arrive to a new place, make new friends, learn a new language, and a new culture. It was both exciting and a challenging experience for a fifteen year old girl. I was sad that I had to leave my friends behind, but I also remember being excited of living in America. It was hard having to learn a new language and as an eighth grader being put into fourth grade to learn English. I do remember being made fun of in school for being in fourth grade instead of eighth grade. Some folk also made fun of us because of the way we dressed. But in spite of the few that made fun of us, I don't remember complaining much or being discouraged, rather we were happy that life was much better. At the church we began to attend, a kind family took us under their wings and we made friends with their three

daughters. They helped us learn the language and within six months we were able to communicate in English so much better.

As soon as we arrived to America, my aunt took my dad to a doctor to see if they could diagnose his illness. The doctor pretty quickly diagnosed that he had appendicitis, in fact his appendix burst years ago and all his organs were infected to the point that the doctor was surprised that he was still alive. It was pure joy for my dad and for all of us to know that the doctor was able to find out some sort of solution and take care of his problems. Removing the appendix and heavy antibiotics helped tremendously, but my dad still struggles even till this day. Yet, he could at least begin to do some light work.

Since my dad could work, my brother decided to travel across the country to Atlanta, Georgia, to see if there were any jobs for him and my father. I decided to join my brother and move to Atlanta, Georgia. When I came to Atlanta, it was a bigger city then Chowchilla, California and I liked it better. I decided to stay in Atlanta with my brother while my dad traveled back with my uncle to California to be reunited with mom and my other siblings. In the mean time I got enrolled in high school and also got my first job at Burger King where I saved enough money to purchase my first car. I enjoyed living in Atlanta, because I could finally work and help my parents with their rent.

When my parents moved to Atlanta, I helped them get a job as custodians at a public school. First, I went through the process to get employed as a custodian at the school then recommended that they would hire my parents. We praise God that they hired my parents, because it was hard to get a job if you couldn't speak English. My parents worked in that elementary school for fifteen years, until they retired. They were blessed with a good-hearted supervisor and he quickly learned to trust them because they worked

so hard. They became very close friends and he even would come for lunch to my parents' house on occasion.

My mom, the hard worker, ended up taking up another full time job at Chick-fill-A so she could pay bills and be able to have a little extra money. She always wanted to have enough so she can help the poor, help her children and be able to purchase a few extra needs for our new home. I met many godly people through my teenage years and I was baptized be immersion at the age of fifteen, but at the time I was baptized more because a few of my friends were getting baptized and I joined them in the baptism. When I started attending high school I lost interest in God for a while because there were no youth programs in our church and I made friends with young people that didn't go to church. I lost the spiritual connection with the Lord for a few years until I turned eighteen and I met my future husband.

Occasionally, I would attend the Romanian Seventh-day Adventist Church with my father, not because I desired to worship God, but to make my dad happy. At the same time, I was really searching for something deeper in my life. And occasionally even prayed to God, one day my sister encouraged me to ask God to lead me to meet a godly man. While I prayed for a godly man, I also desired to have a heart of service again and prayed that God would help me become a missionary, because I realized that I was happier when I would help others. I looked into being a missionary and even applied to a few places, but since I was in high school and still under the age of eighteen, I was counseled to wait a few years.

I see now that God was working out his plans in my life, one day a young girl from the Romanian church, called and begged me to go with her to the Romanian youth

group camping trip. At first I was upset at how she got my number, yet she was so persistent that I finally gave in and said "yes." It was at this weekend trip that the Lord led me to meet my future husband. Edward was the youth leader of the youth group and was one of the organizers for the weekend trip.

The weekend trip took place in February of 1999 and we were married the same year, December 5. After we got married we decided to attend Mission College of Evangelism in South Dakota where I would study massage therapy and my husband would prepare for the ministry. Not knowing what the future would bring I still had some faith that I would end up some place as a faithful missionary for the Lord.

It was in South Dakota, when I was twenty years old that I really began to grow deeper in my relationship with the Lord. Mission College of Evangelism was a beautiful retreat in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Being away from all the world's distractions I found it easier to spend lots of time in prayer and Bible study. It was at this school that I re-dedicated myself to the Lord and was re-baptized in a river on the school campus.

Louis Torres was the dean of the school and his wife Carol was the president. They showed me what a true Christian couple looked like in real life. They showed genuine love, mercy, and compassion for all the students. And one of the most encouraging Bible verses that I learned from them was "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13 NASB). This Bible verse would become very meaningful for me through many challenging times.

After one year of massage therapy training at Black Hills Mission College of Evangelism, my husband got a call to become a Bible worker for a church in Michigan. After serving only five months in Michigan we received a call from Ohio to become a

pastor of a two church district. We were really excited about the call because we felt like our prayers were being answered and God was opening doors for us in ministry.

My husband for about a decade was the youngest pastor in the Ohio Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He began serving a two church district at the age of twenty-two. We served in that two church district for eight years. My husband's passion of spending time with God in prayer and Bible Study, his earnest desire to serve people, and to share the gospel with joy, left me an example of service that I truly appreciated.

From my husband I learned how to recognize and pursue God's calling in my life. In recent years I learned to love people more just the way they are and accept individuals just as Jesus did in the gospels. Starting out working at our two churches in Cleveland, we learned a lot about serving the Lord in ministry. One of the churches we served was a Hungarian church with a very hospitable culture. They were so kind and welcoming of us, it sure helped us have a positive beginning to ministry. I had some communication barriers because I didn't speak the Hungarian language and was not able to converse with the older folks but I learned quickly that showing love and kindness would be one of my tools of breaking down barriers.

It was a bit challenging not knowing Hungarian, yet also a blessing to learn to communicate through acts of love and kindness. I focused on working with the youth because I had a passion for young people and they spoke English. I served as the youth leader for a few years until our first born, Levi, was born.

My love and compassion towards youth ministry started at the Hungarian Church. I saw our youth struggle in their journey with Christ with little support, and so I wanted to make a difference. We would get together with the youth for social events, go on

mission trips, and do different activities. My relationship with most of the youth was close especially after a Brazilian mission trip. On the Brazilian mission trip we bonded and came closer together to each other. And even until today, fifteen plus years later, we are still close to many of the young people from the Brazil trip. They always remembered how kindly we treated them and how we gave them unconditional love.

During the eight years in Cleveland we were blessed with two healthy and wonderful children. Levi, as mentioned earlier, was born in 2005 and Leyla was born in 2007. Levi was our first baby and we rejoiced for the blessing of seeing our small family grow. We decorated his room with jungle colors, light green and blue with lots of animals. We were very thrilled to have our first child be a boy so daddy can have his first son to carry his name forward. From the start Levi was struggling with lots of bronchial infections, leading us to many emergency room trips in the middle of the night.

When I was pregnant with Leyla, we decided not to know whether we had a boy or a girl until the baby would be born. What a wonderful surprise she was when we realized that we are having a baby girl. We were thankful that God has blessed us with a baby boy and now a baby girl. We wanted Levi and Leyla to be close in age and grow up together as close siblings. She was easier as far as trips to the hospitals and we were glad for that. She was born seven pounds and eleven ounces, with lots of black hair and beautiful cheeks.

Levi was very excited of the arrival of his little sister and we had Levi bring to the hospital a big teddy bear as a gift to Leyla. She adores her teddy bear even today, and she still sleeps with Teddy every night. She and Levi are very close and at times I refer to them as my two twins. Leyla is our little social bug and she loves sharing and giving

away things just like her mother. She loves her school and participates in art and piano. She has four close friends and they always do things together.

Levi on the other hand is more reserved. When we moved from Mansfield to Dayton a few years ago, Leyla right away made friends. It took Levi a couple of weeks just to transition well to his new school. But he also has two close friends and they always hang out together, even doing schoolwork together. We are so proud of them both and I pray that God will keep them in his arms safely and tenderly.

We focused more on our little family as soon as the children were born and we enjoyed parenting from day one. While Edward was focusing in growing the church and ministering to people, I was at home with the children and for a while working from home for a logistics company, doing data entry. But it was hard working from home and taking care of two little ones, so after some time I quit working to stay home with Levi and Leyla.

Eight years after we began our ministry in Cleveland, Ohio, there was an opening at the Mansfield Seventh-day Adventist Church. This was a one church district with a church school, we applied quickly hoping that it would be a great place for us to raise our children and have them attend a Christian school. Again, God has heard our prayer and we were invited to serve the Mansfield Seventh-day Adventist Church for five years.

During our ministry at Mansfield, I was praying to God to help me understand his will for my life. After the children were a bit older I felt God leading me back to school again. At first I wanted to do something in the health filled, but did not enjoy my science classes. Then, I thought I wanted to become a teacher in order to share my gifts and love with children. Unfortunately, it just seemed that God was not opening certain doors for

certain classes. I was at a point of giving up and not even continuing with my education because I was not seeing any open doors.

It seemed like a big metal door was closed before me and no one was able to open it. I realized that I needed to lift this matter up in prayer and not follow my desires but prayed to discern Christ's leading. With much prayer asking God his will again and again the advisors guided me in the right direction. Also my best friend, my husband, was very supportive in this process and helped me make the right decision.

One of the advisors recommended that I transfer to Ashland Theological Seminary. At first I was not sure about the advice, I prayed much about the matter of taking theology at a Seminary. In my culture, women did not study theology and did not prepare for the ministry. The whole idea went against the culture I grew up in.

My husband believed that the advice was from the Lord and he encouraged me to pursue studying theology. Trying to get into the Seminary was a little tricky, because I did not finish my undergraduate degree at Ashland. But I could request to be accepted into the Seminary and they would make a decision whether to accept my application or deny me. That was the test I placed before God, if the Seminary would accept me without an undergraduate degree then I would know it was God's will.

I was accepted into the seminary at Ashland Theological Seminary, and I knew that it was God's will for my life to study theology. The Lord helped me finish the Masters of Arts in Practical Theology with the emphasis in Chaplaincy. So during my seminary courses I also managed to finish my first unit of CPE at the Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center Hospital.

While doing some on calls at OSU I went through another very challenging experience. The nights that I was on call, I had to sleep in a chaplain's room at the hospital. One morning when I woke up, I felt like the room was spinning and it felt like the ceiling was about to fall on me. I was advised not to drive home to Mansfield, but my husband was flying out for a mission trip to Romania and I had to drive him to the place he would meet up with the mission team. I decided not to scare Edward right before his long trip, so I did not tell him what happened to me in the morning. I said goodbye to Edward, and with the children decided to go to my sister's house and asked her to take me to the hospital.

She was so wonderful and encouraging, she said that the kids would play with their cousin and we would run for a quick check up, get some medicine and all would be well. After some tests, the doctor came in the room and just casually said that it looks like I have a brain tumor. I was shocked, because a friend of mine, younger than me just passed away from brain cancer. I thought that I had a brain tumor and I was going to die, but that can't be, I'm too young to have this tragedy. I felt that my life was flashing before my eyes, wondering what would happen to my kids, and who will take care of them. Also, Edward was over the Atlantic Ocean, he was not by my side to pray with me and support me during this bad news. Of course, part of the shock was also denial, I didn't want to believe that the doctor was right, I didn't want to believe that my children would grow up without their mother.

After more tests, it was determined that I did not have a brain tumor but an aneurysm in the brain. I was not sure if this was better than having a brain tumor, but personally felt that anything was better than a tumor in the brain. Through this scary

process people came to me with good intentions sharing their sad stories how they had a loved one die from an aneurysm. I knew that they meant well, and that it was a serious diagnosis, but their stories created more anxiety in me. I decided to take some time off from attending church because I didn't want to hear aneurysm stories from church members.

I shed many tears, had lots of fear, and times of anxiety, but found Psalms in the Bible helped calm my fears and brought peace to my heart. Through God's guidance we were led to a doctor at the Kettering Hospital, who spoke to us with encouraging words and told us that he did many surgeries like this and they all turned out successful. I knew that God was not done with me; He still had plans for my life and that He would get me through this experience.

My fears were gone because I felt that God led us to Doctor Khan and even spoke through him. I learned to trust in God during this anxious time in my life, I relied on His leading and allowed God to take control of my future. During this time my devotional life went deeper. There was one Bible verse that kept coming up in books I read, sermons I heard, in different ways, there was this Bible verse. "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9 NASB). This verse gave me such courage and confidence, I took it as God's word for me personally and the words of this Bible verse gave me great hope.

To successfully deal with the aneurysm, the doctor had to do surgery with multiple angiograms. Each part of the process had its own risks, but God's hand was with Doctor Khan, and here I am five years later and no brain aneurysm. Right before I

entered surgery, a few friends of ours who are pastors and a couple of chaplains from the hospital came into my room and prayed with me. This touched my heart so much, here I was studying to care for others and in my greatest need, I was cared for by my spiritual friends. The support, care, and prayers were so encouraging that I went into the surgery fully trusting God and thankful for caring friends.

A few months after the surgery to heal the brain aneurysm, the Lord opened the doors for me to be a chaplain resident at the Kettering Health Network. This caused our family to move from Mansfield to Dayton, Ohio. This also meant that the Lord opened the door for my husband to move from pastoring a church to be the youth director of the local Conference, so that we could live just about anywhere in Ohio. It is amazing to see how the Lord opened doors both for my husband and I, so that both of us could serve God in ministry.

In the midst of my residency program, my mother was diagnosed with stage four ovarian cancer. The diagnosis scared my siblings and myself, for it never crossed our minds that cancer would ever hit our family. Yet, it took us by surprise that mom was the one facing this hideous cancer. This dark cloud was settled above our heads and would not move in any shape or form. I felt like this was not reality but just a nightmare of darkness and sorrow. Mom and I were very close and we would talk daily on the phone. She would trust me with all her fears and concerns, and she loved the fact that someone cared enough to listen to her concerns. She would rejoice every time the phone rang and I called her often because she lived in Dora, Missouri with no close friends living near her. While she shared her concerns, I shared my goals in ministry. Even though she would not

fully agree about my role as a female in the ministry, she was still very encouraging and supportive.

Mom was the glue for our family and she would often express her desire of peace and unity between her children. In her last year of life, she always encouraged us to love each other. Even while she was battling cancer, my mom made sure dad was taken care of, that he had fresh food to eat. Mom battled ovarian cancer for seven months and through this time I would drive to Missouri often. Every time I saw her, my heart ached with pain and I asked God for a miracle to heal my mother.

Yet, I knew that this world of sin and suffering is not our home and that we are here only a short time. We placed our hope in Jesus and slowly accepted the reality that my mom would not recover. My closure with mom was that she asked for me in her last hours of life and that I spent the last week and the last minutes by her side. I felt that she and I had a close connection, and she wanted to make sure that I was there by her side until her last breath.

I took a look at her hands and it reminded me how special they were, she worked so hard to provide for us, to raise us, and care for us. She left a legacy of love and compassion in everything that she did. I miss my mother every day, and at certain times, memories would flood my mind of my mother and tears would flow from my eyes. The process of grief has not been easy, it often feels like a broken shattered glass that is hard to put back together again. Since I was so close to my mom, I feel like I lost a big part of my life. And at times, when I think of her, I miss her so much that I have a hard time dealing with the grief. I can't believe that she is gone and how quickly she passed away. I dream of her often, and many times when I dream of her, it is those last moments of her

life. The moments when my mom was passing away were very hard for me, yet I'm thankful that I was there next to her the entire time, while she was saying her goodbyes and calling us by name to come sit beside her. I am so glad that she called me by name to come in her bedroom and asked me to keep her company. With joy I responded that it would be my delight to be with her, she kept looking at me and at the window like she knew that she would pass away soon.

I think of those moments often and every time I think of her last moments of life, strong grief fills my heart. I sometimes wonder why my mom had to die from ovarian cancer and why so soon. There are many mysteries in this life, but I know that this life is temporary and that there is a day when I shall be reunited with my loved ones, never to be separated again. Weeks after she passed, it was hard for me to go back to work, because I would see people suffering in the hospital, and see their loved ones grieve. Some days I didn't think I could make it through day, but God's strength helped me to take one day at a time.

After I finished my chaplain residency, I was offered a job as resource chaplain at Kettering Health Network Hospital. The training that I received at the chaplain residency helped me tremendously to deal with the loss of mom. There were many personal reflections that the residency group helped process and helped me grow spiritually and professionally through this painful time in my life. This process helped me deal with the fear of death, funerals, and dealing with my own grief as well.

Conclusion

I learned that God has called me many years ago into the ministry, yet I feel like I only heard Him with full surrender within the last six years. After not listening to the Lord in the past, I realized that I should always give God a chance and hear His voice first. He opened great doors for which I am grateful for and fully surprised at how he has been working in my life. After God opened doors for a resource position, the Lord again surprised me and KHN asked me to become the main staff Chaplain for the Soin Medical Center. I have been blessed to serve patients, staff, volunteers, nurses, doctors, and administrators on a daily basis.

Soin Medical Center also paid for me to take three classes at Andrews University. The three classes were on Seventh-day Adventist church history, Seventh-day Adventist fundamental beliefs, and a class on the Spirit of Prophecy. The purpose of the classes was so I could get the ecclesiastically endorsement by my denomination. I was privileged not only to get the ecclesiastical endorsement, but also to also receive my commissioned license in the ministry and be on the track for ordination.

After serving about a year at Soin Medical Center, I transferred to SV as the Chaplain for Spiritual Services Department. SV is smaller and older then the Soin Medical Center. But I love the nurses and administrators at SV. And I truly believe that God has placed me here to serve. As I look at my journey and the examples of my parents, I truly see God's leading to place me where I serve today. My dad's emphasis on having a relationship with God led me to the seminary, my mom's caring example for others led me to serve in chaplaincy. Now I have the privilege to intersect this project of support for the nurses and my ministry journey. And I pray that God will continue to bless and use

my mind, soul, heart, hands, and feet in serving and caring for those who are in great need of His loving presence.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Caretakers such as nurses, doctors, and administrators work hard to help patients in a hospital setting. All too often there is minimal support and opportunity for caretakers to rejuvenate and reenergize for continued service. Ministering to the caretakers in the hospital setting is essential both for caretakers and patients. The chaplain is in a unique position to minister both to the patients in a hospital and to the caretakers. A chaplain in the hospital could develop close relationships with the caretakers by listening, earning respect, providing support, and going out of the way in providing emotional and physical support.

Caring for caretakers will help each individual grow spiritually and emotionally in their work setting, which will enable them to provide better care for whom they care. The purpose for this paper will be to demonstrate through a Biblical story from the Old Testament, the importance of giving support to caretakers. I chose Exodus 18 as an example of Jethro's influence and care for Moses, who was the caretaker for the whole nation of Israel. From this pericope, I see the power and results of listening, observing, worshipping with, fellowshipping with, and giving advice to a caretaker. Through Jethro's influence, Moses became a more effective leader, and Moses did not burn out from his heavy burdens due to the help and advice of Jethro.

Background

I begin with a background of how Jethro and Moses came to know each other. Moses murdered an Egyptian man for beating up a Hebrew man. The following day, he ran into two Hebrew men who knew about him murdering the Egyptian. This caused Moses to flee from Egypt. Moses found himself in Midian at a well observing a conflict between the seven daughters of Jethro and the shepherds who were mistreating them. The seven shepherdesses drew water for their own flock, and the shepherds tried to take it away from them. Moses took control of the situation, defended and delivered the shepherdesses. The daughters shared with their father, Jethro, what took place, and he asked them to bring the Egyptian man, Moses, to him so he can thank him for his help and intervention. This is where Moses meets Jethro. In return, Moses remains and becomes a shepherd for Jethro, and ends up marrying one of Jethro's daughters, Zipporah.[1]

In Exodus 2:16, Jethro is referred to as "the priest of Midian." "Midian is a descendant of Abraham and Keturah, Abraham's wife after the death of Sarah (Gen. 25:1, 4)."[2] Since "Midian is identified as a descendant of Abraham and Keturah (his wife after Sarah's death), so Moses and Jethro had a common ancestor."[3] Not only did they have a

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[1] P. E. Hughes, "Jethro," *Dictionary of the Old Testament Pentateuch*, eds. T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2003), 467–469.

[2] Jon L. Dybdahl, ed., *Andrews Study Bible* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2010), 96.

[3] James K. Bruckner, *Exodus, New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2008), 163–164.

common ancestor, Moses became a bridge to link Abraham's descendants between Keturah and Sarah.[4]

In Exodus 2:18, Jethro is called by the name Reuel, which means "friend of God," and later, Jethro is spoken of as the "father-in-law of Moses."[5] "Jethro was good to Moses from the outset of their relationship (2:20) and offered consistent support for Moses' calling."[6] His character displays him to be a godly man and very hospitable to Moses. Moses develops a family and continues towards his calling in saving the people of Israel out of Egypt (Exod. 3).

According to the authors of the Old Testament, Moses sent his wife and two sons back to Jethro, as he focused on his ministry in Egypt. Jethro cares for Moses' family, while Moses leads the people of Israel out of Egypt by the power of God. Jethro, after hearing all about what God had done for the people of Israel, comes to visit Moses and brings Zipporah and the children to him. "In summary, Jethro manifests a positive character in the unfolding biography of Moses and the narrative of the Israelites exodus out of Egypt. He brought stability to the individual Moses and facilitated a streamlined reorganization that affected the collective Israelite community on their journey to the Promised Land."[7]

Most commentaries such as *Interpretation*, *Anchor Bible*, and *Westminster,* divide Exodus 18 into two parts. But one commentary divided the chapter into three parts,

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[4] John I. Durham, *Exodus, Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco, TX: Word Books, Publisher, 1987), 240.

[5] Hughes, 467–469.

[6] Bruckner, 163–164.

[7] Hughes, 469.

making it more clear and helpful for this study here. The first section is called the "Joyful Reunion," the second part is "Jethro Worships Yahweh," and the third part is "Sharing the Load," according to The Communicator's Commentary.[8]

Jethro Comes to Visit Moses

The first part of the story is found in Exodus 18:1-7. This section explains how Jethro comes to Moses and begins his service and ministry for Moses, the leader and caretaker of Israel.

> "Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people, how the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Moses' wife Zipporah, after he had sent her away, and her two sons, of whom one was named Gershom, for Moses said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land." The other was named Eliezer, for *he said*, "The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh." Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness where he was camped, at the mount of God. He sent word to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her." Then Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and he bowed down and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare and went into the tent" (Exodus 18:1-7, NASB).

Exodus 18:1 introduces Jethro as both priest of Midian, and Moses' father-in-law. "The narrator's emphasis on this relationship is shown by the repeated reference to Jethro as Moses' father-in-law (thirteen times; "priest" only once)."[9] Jethro hears how God redeemed Israel from Egyptian bondage. "His hearing is an extension of the hearing reported in 15:14, only now the reception is positive. The bearer of the news is not known, but what God had done was of such magnitude that the word had spread like

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[8] Maxie D. Dunnam, *The Communicator's Commentary: Exodus* (Waco, TX: Word Books Publisher, 1987), 222–227.

[9] Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus*: *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 195.

wildfire, from oasis to oasis, until it reached Moses' family."[10] The first thing to note about Jethro in Exodus 18:1 is that his ears are in tune to what is happening in the life of Moses. As Jethro hears the good news, he gets into action on behalf of Moses and his family.

Jethro acts on behalf of Moses by doing a favor for him. He brings Moses' wife, Zipporah, and their children back to Moses. It is not explained in Exodus when or why Zipporah went to stay with her father while Moses was in Egypt. But Jethro is kind enough to care for Zipporah and the boys while Moses is away. Then news reaches Jethro of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and Fretheim points out that Jethro comes to Moses out of interest for his welfare as well as to "reestablish family ties."[11]

Before the reunion takes place between Moses and Jethro, Exodus 18:3, 4 takes time to describe and explain the names of Moses' two sons. "The detail relating to Zipporah and Moses' two sons reinforces the interest in family. In particular, the attention given to the sons' names demonstrates an interest in family religious continuity."[12] His firstborn son's name, Gershom, literally means "Stranger There,"[13] as Moses explained the meaning of Gershom in Exodus 18:3, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land."

His second son's name, Eliezer, literally means "My God is Help."[14] Again Moses explains in Exodus 18:4 why he chose the name Eliezer, "The God of my father

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[10] Fretheim, 195.

[11] Fretheim, 195–196.

[12] Fretheim, 195.

[13] Dybdahl, 96.

[14] Dybdahl, 96.

was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh." "Hebrew parents often gave expression to their hopes or their emotions in the names they gave their children. Certainly this was the case with Moses. . . . Can you feel the depths of soul revealed here? These two names reflect Moses' feelings during his exile from Egypt. The naming of the first child indicates his inner struggle and feeling of alienation. The naming of the second child witnesses to the spiritual pilgrimage he had made in the meantime."[15] Dunnam notes that in naming his second son, Moses, in essence expresses his faith.[16]

In naming his children, Moses clearly articulates his emotions and experience in his life at the time. His experience shows that the spiritual journey at times can be like a rollercoaster. There are times when one feels lost, perhaps without hope, and then as the journey continues, hope returns, light shines on the path and the future looks a bit brighter. Moses experienced these emotions in his spiritual journey.

Why does Exodus 18 take the time to remind the reader of Moses and Zipporah's children's names, and the meaning of their names? Is it only to highlight the importance of the family?[17] The Andrews Study Bible notes another reason for mentioning the names of Gershom and Eliezer. "The names of Moses' sons (2:22) reinforce Israel's experience. They are continually reminded of their status as aliens (22:21; 23:9) and of their deliverance from Egypt (20:2)."[18] In Exodus 18, Jethro and Moses spend time talking about Israel's experience. The experience of Moses ties in well with the experience of

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[15] Dunnam, 223.

[16] Dunnam, 224.

[17] Fretheim, 195.

[18] Dybdahl, 96.

Israel, and the naming of his two sons in a way brings both his experience and the experience of Israel together.

Jethro hears about Israel's experience and sets out to meet Moses. "Israel's salvation from Egypt, which had been completed by crossing the Sea of Reeds, set Jethro in motion. Jethro would not have waited for the revelation, as he had no reason to expect it. He waited till Moses was beyond danger and could receive his family again."[19] Moses hears about Jethro coming to meet him and that he was bringing Zipporah and the boys with him. Moses has so much respect for Jethro that he does not even wait for Jethro to arrive, but goes out to meet him.[20] "The encounter between Moses and Jethro is friendly, and Moses pays a special honor to Jethro. He goes out to meet Jethro, kisses him, and bows down."[21]

The pericope states that the camp is located "at the mountain of God" (v. 5). This presents a problem as Dozeman points out. "The land of Midian is associated with the mountain of God in the commission of Moses (3:1), which provides narrative background for the setting of the story. But the setting of the mountain of God at this juncture of the story creates a problem voiced by Ibn Ezra: Moses is encamped at the mountain of God to meet Jethro, but his arrival there does not appear until 19:1-2."[22] One way to solve this dilemma is to state that the story of Exodus 18 is not in chronological order with the

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[19] Benno Jacob, *The Second Book of the Bible: Exodus* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1992), 494.

[20] William H. C. Propp, *Exodus 1-18. The Anchor Bible* (New York: Doubleday, 1998), 630.

[21] Viktor Ber, 2008, "Moses and Jethro: harmony and conflict in the interpretation of Exodus 18," *Communio Viatorum 50,* no. 2 (2008), 147-170, *ATLA Religion Database, with ATLASerials EBSCOhost* (accessed December 8, 2017), 156.

[22] Thomas B. Dozeman, *Exodus*, *Eerdmans Critical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 401.

stories recorded before and after in the book of Exodus. "The problems of setting and chronology have led interpreters to conclude that the story of Jethro in chapter 18 is out of place, and that it originally followed the revelation in chapters 19-34."[23] Jacob's commentary, on the other hand, makes the case that the chronology is correct from the stories that are before and after Exodus 18. "Our chapter has, therefore, been placed, to contrast with Amalek. . . . A whole set of internal and external arguments will demonstrate the proper chronological placement of our chapter here before chapter 19."[24]

The purpose of this paper is not to decide whether the story of Exodus 18 is in chronological order with the story of the Amalekites in Exodus 17 and the experience of Israel at the mountain of God beginning in Exodus 19. We will, however, note that the story is placed here in Exodus, and that Moses and Jethro did meet at the mountain of God. "'The mountain of God' at which Moses and Israel are camped and to which Jethro comes with Moses' wife and sons is Sinai–Horeb, as the use of the same phrase at 3:1; 4:27; and 24:13 makes clear. Whenever the time of Jethro's rendezvous, the place quite appropriately is the mountain of the supreme revelation of Yahweh's Presence."[25] This is the important part of the story. In spite of not knowing the exact chronology, it is clear that they meet at the mountain of God.

This section concludes with Moses and Jethro entering the tent to talk privately. Fretheim writes that the tent they enter is "a reference to a traveling sanctuary."[26] Dozeman also notes that some view the tent as a place of worship; "the reference to the

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[23] Dozeman, 401.

[24] Jacob, 494.

[25] Durham, 243.

[26] Fretheim, 196.

mountain of God may indicate a cultic tent, perhaps even the tent of meeting."[27] Dozeman goes on to take the view that this is more of a personal tent and not a place of worship."[28] The Harper Collins Study Bible presumes they enter Jethro's personal tent.[29] And Bruckner states in his commentary that they enter Moses' tent.[30] Again, whether it was a cultic or domestic tent is unknown, but what is important is the discussion that went on in the tent. "The exciting thing for me is in what went on in the tent between Moses and Jethro. Certainly everything is not recorded in the scriptural account. . . . So, what went on in the tent was important, so important that Jethro rejoiced, and concluded, 'Now I know the Lord is greater than all the gods' (Exodus 18:11)."[31] The meeting in the tent was an important meeting that blessed both Jethro and Moses.

"The personal detail of the meeting between Jethro and Moses is unusually warm and full of mutual respect. Jethro had sent word, but Moses did not wait for them to arrive. Moses went out to meet them. . . . The narrative describes Moses meeting with Jethro, respectfully bowing down and greeting him with a traditional kiss. Then they entered Moses' tent to talk privately. This is a rare personal glimpse that adds credibility to Moses' narrative character. He had a peer, friend, and human counselor."[32] And one might add, also a helpful caretaker.

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[27] Dozeman, 402.

[28] Dozeman, 403.

[29] Wayne A. Meeks, ed., *The HarperCollins Study Bible* (San Francisco, CA: HarperOne, 1989), 114.

[30] Bruckner, 164.

[31] Dunnam, 226.

[32] Bruckner, 164.

As I conclude section one of the pericope, I note a few lessons regarding Jethro as a helpful caretaker. First, Jethro cares enough to keep his eyes open and his ears in tune to what is happening to Moses in Egypt (see Exodus 18:1). Second, Jethro cares for Moses' family, his wife and two sons, while Moses is putting his life in danger in bringing the people of Israel out of Egypt.

Third, as Jethro hears about all God has done for Israel through Moses' leadership, he feels that it is safe to reunite Moses' family. He brings Zipporah and their sons to Moses. Jethro cares enough to do a favor to Moses by bringing his family to him. Jethro could've sent Zipporah off with helpers, or sent a message to Moses to come and pick up his family. Jethro instead took the initiative to help and to care. And fourth, when Jethro came to the mountain of God and reunited with Moses, he took the time to fellowship with Moses and ask about his well being (Exodus 18:7). The next section will share part of the conversation that Jethro and Moses had. But it is well worth noting that Jethro cared enough to take the time to listen to Moses and to Moses' experience.

Jethro Listens, Rejoices, Blesses, and Worships

Dunnam calls the second part of Exodus 18:8-12, "Jethro Worships Yahweh."[33] Dozeman notices three important scenes that take place at the mountain of God and how the three scenes progress towards a climax. "The worship at the mountain of God progresses through three scenes, shifting in focus between Jethro (vv.1-5, 9-12) and Moses (vv. 6-8). The opening scene recounts the journey of Jethro to the mountain of God (vv. 1-5). Moses takes center stage in the second scene, recounting to Jethro the

[33] Dunnam, 225.

details of the divine rescue (vv. 6-8). The final scene is the climax of the story. Jethro leads Moses and the Israelite elders in their first cultic ritual in the wilderness (vv. 9-12)."[34] According to Dozeman this section covers the two last scenes of worship at the mountain of God with Moses and Jethro together. Moses is recounting the rescue from Egypt, then Jethro leads the leaders of Israel in worship.

> Moses told his father-in-law all that the Lord had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had befallen them on the journey, and *how* the Lord had delivered them. Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, in delivering them from the hand of the Egyptians. So Jethro said, "Blessed be the Lord who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, *and* who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all the gods; indeed, it was proven when they dealt proudly against the people." Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law before God (Exodus 18:8-12, NASB).

The conversation in the tent begins with Moses sharing what God has done in rescuing the Israelites from Egypt. "Within the tent, along with proper refreshments, they lovingly told each other all which had occurred. Moses' report was divided into two sections; the first dealt with events till the defeat of Pharaoh and the Exodus from Egypt (chapters 5-14); the second from the Sea of Reeds to their meeting. This meant the events of Marah, manna, and Amalek. The first represented God's deeds for Israel's benefit and the second Israel's troubles. . . but God also saved Israel from these troubles. Moses said nothing about himself."[35] Moses was a humble person to not center the conversation about himself but to give God the glory.

Fretheim further elaborates the meaning of Moses declaring God's dealings with Israel. "Moses *declares the good news* to Jethro concerning all that God has done on

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[34] Dozeman, 400.

[35] Jacob, 497.

behalf of Israel—with no reference to his own considerable role. The word 'declare' (*sapar)* was used in 9:16 to refer to the basic divine purpose in these events. This is the first reported instance of the carrying out of that purpose. It is to be noted that the hardships are also shared, not simply the blessings."[36] Moses declares honestly and faithfully both the good and bad experiences. God saving Israel from Egypt was not an easy endeavor, the experience included hardships.

Dunnam in his commentary brings out the practical application of witnessing. "Moses showed us what the right kind of witnessing will do. The witness that is effective is our sharing what the Lord has done for us. So what goes on in the tent is important– how you entertain and what you talk about. Many a person in the balance would be turned in favor of God if only you and I would begin to tell of God's dealings in our own lives."[37] As Moses witnessed, he was humble, honest, and faithful. His witness, therefore, was effective and led Jethro to rejoice and know God in a deeper understanding.

The word used for Jethro's rejoicing is a word rarely used in the Old Testament. "'Rejoiced' is a rare word in the Old Testament. In fact, it is found in only two other places: Job 3:6 and Psalm 21:6."[38] Enns elaborates further on why the word "rejoiced" is a rare word. ". . . the verb here from the root *hadah* is rarely used in the OT, elsewhere only Job 3:6 and Ps. 21:6. LXX translates *exeste*, 'was astonished' (perhaps from a text that has a form of *harad*). This could be the correct text, indicating that Jethro was amazed and astonished at all the good which Yahweh had done for Israel."[39]

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[36] Fretheim, 196.

[37] Dunnam, 226.

[38] Dunnam, 223.

[39] J. Phillip Hyatt, *Commentary on Exodus, New Century Bible* (London: Oliphants, 1971), 189.

Jethro has much to rejoice over. He "rejoices over all the good that God has brought to Israel, including the deliverance from the Egyptians. His use of much of Moses' own language testifies to the basic way in which the faith is transmitted from generation to generation (see Deut. 26:5-11; Josh. 24:2-13)."[40] Benno also explains further the purpose of Jethro's rejoicing. "He [Jethro] characterized all the events as benefits which He had shown Israel; He remedied their troubles, and His salvation from Egypt remained central, as Moses himself had just repeated."[41]

Benno also points out an important factor about Jethro praising God in verse 10. "After Jethro had delivered his judgment about these events, he recapitulated them in order to clothe them in a festive benediction. The first benediction known to us was pronounced by Noah over Shem, the second by the foreign priest Melchizedek over Abraham (Gen. 14:20). Here the third was spoken by Jethro over Israel."[42] Jethro joins the likes of Noah and Melchizedek in blessing God after hearing or experiencing an act of saving by God.

After Jethro blesses God, he goes on to make an important statement that has led to different types of interpretation. Jethro says, "Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods;" (verse 11). Commentators have disagreed on the meaning of this statement by Jethro. A few have concluded that Jethro is converting to the worship of the God of Israel. "Jethro heard of all that the Lord had done for Israel in bringing them out of Egypt and immediately gave testimony to the greatness of God above all other gods, echoing the line in the song of Moses 'Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?' (Ex

[40] Fretheim, 196.

[41] Jacob, 497.

[42] Jacob, 497.

15:11). . . . As perhaps a new convert, Jethro contributed to the community almost immediately."[43] This commentary hints at the idea that Jethro is a new convert after hearing Moses share the experience of Israel.

Yet many other commentators take the position that Jethro has believed in God and that belief is strengthened and deepened because of Moses' testimony. "Jethro's further confession moves from a repetition of Moses' summary to an assertion of his own. He declares his own faith on the basis of his own experience. What Moses has told him couples with what he knew already, and leads him to conclude on his own that 'Yahweh is greater than all gods.' The assumption implicit in this statement is that Jethro believes, as he has believed, that Yahweh is a God among gods. He has believed indeed, that Yahweh is greater than the others. Now he has confirmation that in that belief he was right."[44]

Bruckner states, "What Jethro believed and came to believe is a matter of wide speculation, since the text tells us less than we would like to know. From it we can deduce that he was a priest for God (Elohim) but did not know Elohim as the *Lord* until Moses' witness about the exodus."[45] Bruckner also states that Jethro has known God and was a priest for God, but now has a greater understanding of God. As two other commentators also state. "Jethro *publicly confesses* that Yahweh is God of gods and Lord of lords. He now 'knows' (an important word in Exodus) that Yahweh is incomparable. Whatever faith Jethro may have had before, there is now a new content to his confession

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[43] Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans, *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2002), 38.

[44] Durham, 244.

[45] Bruckner, 163.

in view of God's creation of a new people."[46] Each of these theologians acknowledge the lack of knowledge on how well Jethro knew God in the past. Yet they assume that he was not a new convert, but knew God, and that his understanding of God deepened through his visit with Moses.

Dozeman explains Jethro's testimony very clearly:

> The divine power implied in the act of blessing is made explicit in Jethro's confession in v. 11. It separates into three parts: a statement of new awareness, "Now I know"; a proclamation of the incomparable greatness of Yahweh, "Yahweh is greater than all other gods"; and a reason for the confession: "For in the matter when they [the Egyptians?] dealt presumptuously with them." Each phrase has attracted extensive interpretation. Scholars debate whether the knowledge of Jethro signifies his first encounter with Yahweh. Some argue that the confession of incomparability indicates Jethro's conversion to Yahwism. Yet others contemplate whether the reference to "other gods" is meant to indicate Jethro's polytheism. In addition, the reason for Jethro's confession is unclear. The NIV rendition, "for he [Yahweh] did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly," is at best a loose paraphrase."[47]

I appreciate Dozeman's clarity in putting verse 11 into three sections and his recognition that some commentators express their viewpoints of Jethro's polytheism and perhaps conversion. But Dozeman's viewpoint is that Jethro knew God and, as others have stated, his understanding of God deepened through this experience. He states:

> The confession of Jethro is the same as the widow of Zarephath and the cultic confession in Psalm 20. He knows Yahweh (Exodus 18:1). But the report of Moses adds new experience to his knowledge of Yahweh. The divine rescue of the Israelites confirms the incomparability of Yahweh over all the other gods. Jethro's confession echoes the refrain in the Song of the Sea, where Yahweh's incomparability to the other gods was also confessed (15:11). . . . The point of the confession is that Jethro's knowledge of Yahweh is deepened by the events of the exodus. His confession is no different than the psalmist who states: "For I know that Yahweh is great; our Lord is above all gods" (Ps 135:5).[48]

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[46] Fretheim, 196.

[47] Dozeman, 403–404.

[48] Dozeman, 405.

After Jethro's confession of God's greatness above all the other gods, he does one more thing to show his belief in God. "The final part of Jethro's confession of faith was his burnt offering and other sacrifices, brought to God and eaten together with all the elders of Israel."[49] Bruckner goes on to explain what type of sacrifices Jethro led out in. "Jethro offered the two general types of sacrifices common in the OT: 'burnt offering' (*olah*) and 'sacrifices' (*zebakh*). The former were wholly consumed by the fire in tribute to God. The latter were sacrificed with the blood and fat offered to God and the meat eaten by the people in a fellowship (*shalom*) or thanksgiving (*todah*) meal (24:5, 9-11; 32:6; Deut. 12:27; 27:7; Lev. 3:1). The giving of the burnt offering was more than a cultural exchange. It was an acknowledgement of one's devotion to God."[50]

The fact that Jethro led out and offered the sacrifices is clear, but where he offered the sacrifices is ambiguous. Fretheim assumes that "Jethro presents an offering to God and in the portable sanctuary ("before God") worships with the leaders of Israel (Moses is assumed to be present in the sanctuary from v. 7)."[51] Then Enns states that, "We should also note that this sacrifice presumably takes place in 'the tent' (v. 7; likely Moses' tent), and that a show of hospitality is to be expected. Yet some have remarked that this may be a portable sanctuary of some sort. In fact, the ambiguity of the phrase 'the tent' may be purposeful so as to suggest either option. In any case, that the sacrifice occurs is significant."[52] Since it is not know which tent they entered in verse 7, then there is no

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[49] Bruckner, 165.

[50] Bruckner, 165–166.

[51] Fretheim, 196.

[52] Peter Enns, *Exodus, The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 370.

idea in what tent the sacrifices were offered. I do not think that this was the sanctuary because I believe that the stories here in Exodus are in chronological order and therefore the sanctuary had not been built yet. This is a personal tent, whether it is Jethro's or Moses' tent.

Either way, which tent the sacrifice was offered is not that important. What is important is the fellowship of Moses with Jethro. Fretheim makes some excellent points regarding Jethro:

> Jethro is the subject of all of this activity except for the crucial element of witness on Moses' part in verse 8. Jethro hears, visits the community of faith, rejoices, gives thanks, confesses, presents an offering, and worships. All of this activity is permeated with specific language regarding God's deliverance of Israel. Such activities give the appearance of the steps one might take to be integrated into the community of faith, and the conversion of Jethro is often claimed. Yet care must be used not to claim too much. Jethro's statement in verse 11 that he now knows that Yahweh is greater than other gods implies that Yahweh was not unknown to him. But the exodus events have now changed whatever status Yahweh may have had in his community. Jethro identifies himself with *Moses'* understanding rather than the other way around.[53]

In this section there are at least six lessons from Jethro, as someone who cares deeply for Moses and supports Moses' ministry. First, Jethro took the time to listen to Moses as Moses shared the experiences he went through (see verse 8). Second, Jethro responded with enthusiasm by rejoicing over the great news that Moses shared (see verse 9). Third, Jethro brought God into the center of the picture by blessing God (see verse 10). Fourth, Jethro shares with Moses his deep convictions and what he has learned from Moses' witness (see verse 11). Fifth, Jethro leads out in worship, by sacrificing offerings to God (see verse 12). And last, also in verse 12, Jethro ate with Moses, Aaron and the leaders. Eating together was very important in Bible times as it is an important act of life today.

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[53] Fretheim, 196–197.

One could learn from Jethro how to help caregivers by listening to their experiences, responding positively, transparently, and openly, even if it means sharing what one has learned in the process. Jethro shared transparently and openly that he had a greater and deeper understanding of God due to Moses' sharing. It is also important to pray and worship with the caregivers we are interested in supporting, just as Jethro worshipped and offered sacrifices with Moses, Aaron, and the leaders. And last of all, never underestimate the power of sitting down and fellowshipping with people through eating a meal together. There is great power in showing support and care by eating together.

Jethro Advises Moses

Dunnam calls the last section of this pericope "Sharing the Load" (verses 13-27).[54] It is in this section that Jethro does a great service for Moses by giving him good and sound advice that helped Moses from burning out quickly as the leader of Israel. "Exodus 18, a unified story, witnesses to the two central aspects of what it means to be the people of God; *faith and law*. Verses 1-12 focus on the *declaration and confession* of what God has done for Israel. Verses 13-27 center on *community structures that give shape to the life of faith*."[55]

> It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening. Now when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit *as judge* and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?" Moses said to his father-in-law,

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[54] Dunnam, 227.

[55] Fretheim, 195.

> "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor and make known the statutes of God and His laws." Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you are doing is not good. You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do. Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place *these* over them *as* leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. Let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear *the burden* with you. If you do this thing and God *so* commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people also will go to their place in peace." So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said. Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. They judged the people at all times; the difficult dispute they would bring to Moses, but every minor dispute they themselves would judge. Then Moses bade his father-in-law farewell, and he went his way into his own land (Exodus 18:13-27).

This last section may be summed up in four parts. Part one, Jethro observes Moses (verses 13, 14a). Part two, Jethro assesses the day and debriefs with Moses (verses 14b-18). Part three, Jethro gives counsel to Moses on changes he ought to make (verses 19-23). And part four is the acceptance of the counsel and farewell of Jethro returning home (verses 24-27).

First of all, Jethro observes Moses in action. "The previous day belonged to the meal and its guests; now Jethro observed Moses at work."[56] Dozeman explains the observation, "Moses is presented as a judge (v. 13). The people surround him with cases to be resolved and the action continues from morning until evening."[57]

After Jethro observes Moses and the people, he begins his assessment with a

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[56] Jacob, 498.

[57] Dozeman, 408.

question. "What is this thing that you are doing for the people?" (verse 14). "The wise question of an old chieftain who has learnt the great lesson of how to devolve authority. Like many a Christian leader, Moses was wearing himself out unnecessarily (verse 18) by trying to do everything single-handed. This is not always a mark of ambition: it is sometimes the mark of the over-conscientious and over-anxious. More, it was wearing out the people (verse 18 again), an aspect usually overlooked. Delay in justice, arising from similar reasons, was one of the causes of Absalom's revolt in later centuries (2 Sam. 15:1-6)."[58]

Jethro saw clearly what was going on, and the potential danger of things continuing like at it was. Moses, on the other hand, did not even understand the question Jethro was asking. "Moses misses the emphasis in Jethro's question. The priest asks, not why the people come to Moses, but why Moses has no assistance."[59] Jethro, in wisdom, knows the problem and instead of just telling Moses the problem, he begins with a couple of questions. The questions really state the reality of the problem. "We should note three matters emphasized in Jethro's statement: (1) Moses sat *alone* and judged; (2) the *entire* people (*kol*) stood around waiting for him; (3) this continued through the entire day (v. 13). This represented too much concern with the people."[60]

The problem is that Moses is trying to do all the work himself. He feels that since the people are coming to him, he needs to be the one to help them. Perhaps he is trying to build a strong relationship with the people who have made the journey challenging for

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[58] R. Alan Cole, *Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1973), 140.

[59] Propp, 631.

[60] Jacob, 499.

him by complaining almost every step of the way. "The problem the narrative presents is that Moses' caseload was overwhelming… The same people who brought their quarrel (*rib*) against Moses in this very place (Rephidim, 17:1-7) now come to him to settle their disputes. When Jethro asked why Moses did this, his servant-hearted answer was, 'Because the people come to me.' The same people who said, 'Is the Lord among us or not?' (17:7) now seek God's will through Moses. This was progress."[61]

Bruckner states that it is progress that at least the people are coming to Moses for help and not to complain. While it may be progress, it still is not good. "Jethro might have been impressed with the people seeking God's instruction, but he was certainly not impressed with Moses' lack of administrative savvy. His response was very direct: 'What you are doing is not good.' Moses was blind to his own limitations and the physical limitations of his simple procedure."[62]

Its not that what Moses is doing is wrong or bad, but that it is not the most appropriate or advantageous system to help and care for the people. For the word for "good" (*tov*) could mean "appropriate, salutary, advantageous."[63] "Jethro has observed that Moses, in his capacity of deciding cases brought before him, is trying to do everything all by himself. Moses is not very good at delegating! Besides, people are having to stand in line all day long just to get an audience with him He is not only wearing himself out, the people's patience is wearing thin as well. His own-well being as well as the good order of the community is threatened. Jethro is absolutely right: in this

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[61] Bruckner, 166–167.

[62] Bruckner, 167.

[63] Jacob, 499.

matter having to do with the order of things, what Moses is doing 'is not good.'"[64] Jethro's point is that "no one could continue this over a long period of time! In any case, it would become too burdensome for Moses alone; he could not always be present."[65]

It would have been discouraging for Moses if all that Jethro would have done is observe and assess the situation. How frustrating it would be to have someone say what is wrong with the situation but offer no solution to the problem raised? Jethro is not content to observe and assess, he gives wise and practical advice to Moses. "This adjudication between parties proves too much for Moses. He is dead tired after keeping up the pace all day. Jethro sees what is happening to his son-in-law and offers sound advice: Get some help. Moses is in over his head, and things cannot go on like this for long."[66] The sound advice of Jethro is very helpful and practical. "Seeing the congestion created by the large numbers of people coming to Moses with legal disputes, he gave Moses some practical advice on delegating responsibility."[67] "Now Jethro addressed himself to practical suggestions which Moses could and should effect."[68]

Fretheim calls this practical advice "worldly" advice.[69] It is "worldly" because the advice does not come from an Israelite. "Hence it should not be surprising that Moses is presented as a somewhat inept administrator. His experience of redemption did not immediately endow him or others in Israel with efficient and creative administrative

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[64] Fretheim, 198.

[65] Jacob, 499, 500.

[66] Enns, 370.

[67] Kroeger and Evans, 38.

[68] Jacob, 500.

[69] Fretheim, 199.

skills. Nor should it be surprising that someone who is not an Israelite provides Israel with sound counsel regarding such matters. It is important to say that the appropriation of the exodus experience by Jethro noted in verses 1-12 is not irrelevant to what he now suggests. But his wise counsel has its origins essentially outside the chosen community of Israel. No special revelation has given him these administrative suggestions. They have been developed over time, drawing on a range of experience in God's creation quite untouched by the redeemed community."[70]

What Moses needs is a system of leadership and Jethro helps him establish just such a system. "Moses' first concern and all-consuming task had become administering God's law to the people. The Lord's justice, unknown in Egypt, was not critical… Jethro assisted Moses in establishing a just system of appellate courts with provision for choosing and vetting judges, and a process for appealing to higher courts."[71]

Buckner suggests that Jethro's system had five steps to it. First, "Moses should remain as the people's advocate before God. Moses should 'teach them the decrees and laws.' Just judges should be selected. Establishment of district courts. Establishment of a Supreme Court."[72] Dunnam notes that Jethro's system is helpful for leaders today:

> The mistake of Moses, and Jethro's assessment of the situation, provide good guidance for would-be leaders. Three bad results flowed from Moses' style: (1) he was overworked and simply could not cope with all he had to do; (2) the people were deprived of immediate attention and the swift justice they needed; (3) the elders and other competent individuals were not given the opportunity to use their talents. It is to Jethro's everlasting credit that he was sensitive to this. It was also a sign of his wisdom that he recognized the fact that there were situations with which only Moses would be capable of dealing. So it wasn't a matter of taking

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[70] Fretheim, 198.

[71] Bruckner, 166.

[72] Bruckner, 168.

> leadership from Moses; it was a matter of reordering and dispensing leadership in such a way that other people would share the load.[73]

As the system is established, it is very crucial that the right type of leaders are selected. "Jethro described the kind of persons that should be selected for leadership. They were, first of all, to be committed to God: '*such as fear God.*' ... The second characteristic of the leader is a commitment to truth: '*men of truth*' is what Jethro said they must be… The third characteristic of the leader is commitment to others. Jethro put it as '*hating covetousness*,' or, the phrase could be translated, 'hating unjust gain.'"[74] The right leaders in the right places will make the system a just system of truly helping the people.

Bruckner sums it up so eloquently, "Jethro's strong advice was to let justice roll down through just judges and 'good' legal procedure. The presenting issue was the caseload, but Jethro helped Moses with more. He identified the various elements of the problem (v. 18) and gave Moses some points of advice (vv. 19-22) that would bring satisfaction and well-being (*shalom*) to the community (v. 23)."[75] "Jethro concludes by noting how this will not only serve Moses well but bring peace to a people who no longer have to stand in queues all day long."[76]

After Jethro concludes his advice, he makes an interesting remark: "If you do this thing and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure…" (verse 23). "Jethro also says, in an almost offhand way: God so commands this. Yet there has been no verbal

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[73] Dunnam, 229.

[74] Dunnam, 229–230.

[75] Bruckner, 167.

[76] Fretheim, 199.

command from God, and one ought not be assumed. Jethro exudes the kind of confidence in his own plan that it will in fact be in tune with God's own will for the situation."[77] Jethro is confident that his advice is truly God sent, approved by God, that "God will guide Moses' judgment"[78] as he follows the advice.

The passage records that "Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said" (verse 24). Cole points out that the literal meaning is that Moses "obeyed" his father-in-law, "Moses was humble enough (and wise enough) to learn from his father-in-law."[79] Theologians are divided on when Moses implemented Jethro's plan. Fretheim is convinced that the plan was implemented right away. "Moses does not hesitate for a moment and puts the plan into effect; the unqualified report of its operation indicates that it succeeds in its purpose."[80]

Jacob, on the other hand, assumes that it was much later when Moses implemented the just system that Jethro suggested. "The organization of the people took the following course: Jethro watched the procedure for an entire day ('from morning till evening'), and when alone with his son-in-law, provided his advice. Moses agreed with his analysis, but delayed the execution of this plan till the following year just prior to breaking camp at Sinai. All this then occurred after the giving of the law, the erection of the sanctuary, the numbering of the entire people according to thousands and tribes (which took nineteen days!), and the beginning of the march to the Promised Land."[81]

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[77] Fretheim, 199.

[78] Propp, 633.

[79] Cole, 140.

[80] Fretheim, 199.

[81] Jacob, 502.

Whether Moses implemented the system right away or some time later, he was wise enough to implement it. "It is to Moses' credit that he heeded the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that his father-in-law had advised him to do."[82] Bruckner points out that what Jethro did for Moses in giving him advice was in a sense returning a favor for what Moses has done for him in the past. "The advice Jethro gives is a much-needed remedy to a problematic situation. From one perspective, Jethro is returning a favor. In 2:16-20, Moses comes to Jethro's aid by driving away the shepherds from the well. Now, Jethro comes to Moses' aid. It is worth noting again that both incidents are accompanied by a meal and both acts of kindness result in making 'shepherding' more effective – for the former the shepherding of a flock, for the latter the shepherding of God's people."[83]

Conclusion

Moses was the great leader and caretaker for the people of Israel. His responsibilities and challenges of leadership were great. Jethro came to support and care for the caretaker. He did this by first doing a favor for Moses by bringing his wife and two boys to him. He took the time to listen to Moses, eat with Moses, and worship with Moses. Then, Jethro took the time to observe Moses at work, assess Moses as a leader, and give practical advice to help Moses not to burn out and to make his ministry more successful.

Individuals who care for others need people in their lives who will take the time to listen to them, fellowship with them, and worship with them. Many caretakers,

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[82] Dunnam, 229, 230.

[83] Bruckner, 167.

whether they are pastors, nurses, doctors, or individuals who care for loved ones, burn out because they passionately serve others without thinking of their own health and personal needs. It is also valuable for caretakers to humbly allow someone to observe their work, and receive advice so that they do not burn out, in order for them to become effective leaders and caretakers to individuals in their circle of influence. We are in need of Jethros today who will take the time to support and care for loving caretakers. Support comes through listening, journeying with them, fellowshipping with food, and counseling them. We need to take care of our caretakers so they don't burn out and give up their passion and calling. This will help prevent them from getting sick, and will help them give better care for others.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Making a difference in caring for caretakers is a very significant way of doing ministry. Often ministry is focused on helping those who have some kind of need, and not on ministering to leaders who lead, and caretakers who care. But it is important to minister to leaders who work diligently to serve many. I find that many nurses and staff are such givers of their souls that at times they either forget to take care of themselves, or do not have the full support needed to continue serving effectively. This paper will focus on an individual who served many and was truly supported by someone.

I present the story of Clara Barton's experience and how she was a giver to all, and how she made a difference during the Civil War to soldiers who needed care. Through much exhaustion, illness, and at times depression, Clara needed support for herself, someone to be by her side as she ministered to others. Later, through Clara's journey, Henry Wilson, Vice President of the United States, was one who provided significant support for her as she served the wounded soldiers.

The purpose for this paper is to explore how Clara Barton, one who made a difference in this country, giver of all, filled with compassion, was sustained as a caregiver. We will see through her life story the importance of support for caretakers.

Clara Barton was a caring individual who showed compassion wholeheartedly to many who suffered, were ill, or wounded.

Early Life

Clarissa Harlowe Barton was born on Christmas Day, 1821, when the lilacs were in bloom in Massachusetts. Clara grew up in a large family of seven. She had two brothers and two sisters, and her parents by her side. She lived in a country house and lacked playmates due to age differences between she and her siblings. Her father liked horses and raised his own colts, Highlanders, Virginians and Morgans, on their large land.[1]

Clara was given some education about horses around age five from her brother, who also loved horses. She also adored her dog, and both were inseparable. Her father, Stephen Barton, was a captain and had served as a non-commissioned officer. Clara enjoyed war stories told by her father about how life was as a soldier. As she writes, "His soldier habits and tastes never left him."[2]

Her autobiography reveals a beautiful picture of how she was raised from a young age, how her compassionate heart was always thinking of helping others. On one of her birthdays she shared so much of her cake with all her siblings that none was left for her. So her family then collected some from each other's slices, and made Clara a slice to enjoy also. This story tells me that while growing up Clara was developing a compassionate heart and a deeper understanding of the joy of giving to others.

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[1] Clara Barton, *The Story of My Childhood* (New York, NY: The Baker & Taylor Co., 1907), 18.

[2] Barton, 20.

Clara was a timid young girl, and began her formal education at the age of three. During the winter months she would attend school, attending spelling class with the older neighborhood young men and women. Clara did well in the common school in her younger years, and was advanced to the "Artichoke" class where she spent the winter school days with her brother in reading and spelling classes.[3] She loved reading and became the possessor of *Menseur's Geography*, a geography book compiled by a Rev. Menseur, written specifically for children. Clara was so thrilled that she could not sleep but wanted to study the mountains, lakes, and oceans, as well as the full map itself. She wished she could learn how to dance and skate in her younger age, yet her parents would not allow her to pursue those desires. With great regret in her heart she then learned and ended up enjoying sewing.[4]

Growing up Clara had proficiency in certain "masculine" ways such as adventure and leadership. At times she would be chastised for having this ability to be as daring and adventurous as men. This adventurous side of her often left her chastised on one side and isolated on the other. It was stated about her, "As a child it served mostly to increase her sense of isolation and drive her to continue her search for a niche."[5] She was raised with a strong belief that hard work was important, and she hoped to bring that to her family by caring over the farm in whatever ways she could.[6] "From a young age, therefore, Clara Barton found diligence and usefulness to be methods by which she could gain favor, and

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[3] Barton, 30.

[4] Barton, 32.

[5] Elizabeth Brown Pryor, *Clara Barton Professional Angel* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 15.

[6] Pryor, 16.

she began to define her worth through her service to others."[7] She found ways to help around the school and home through doing different chores. During her younger years Clara took close care of her brother David, being by his bedside for two years after to a fall that took place in the barn. Caring for him was where she found a sense of purpose.[8]

Clara was a tremendous help to other families in the area who were poor, sick, or in need of finances. She would be by their side tutoring them, caring for them, and bringing food, holding their hands through sicknesses and disease. "Her services were so timely, her style so appropriate, that the memory of the early charitable work was treasured throughout her life by its recipients."[9]

This reminds me of my own childhood where as a family, we would also care for and provide for the needy in whatever way that we could, even though we also would often struggle with poverty. Clara Barton's life is described as preparation for the vocational work in which she would be placed in the future. It was amazing to read how God led her through these experiences to serve others and put others first.

As a Teacher

At her first paid teaching position, she molded many hearts towards the love of learning and respect. And because of her way of loving and showing compassion to her students, she received many letters full of gratitude and saying how impactful she was to many students. She enjoyed learning and studying at the Clinton Liberal Institute until she heard the sad news from home that her mother had passed away. She spent many

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[7] Pryor, 16.

[8] Pryor, 16.

[9] Pryor, 17.

days grieving in her room until Loise Barker heard of it and came to her rescue, helping her cope with the loss of her mother.[10]

She then visited home but found no purpose for her presence there. She felt that the home was broken after her mother had gone. She then went to a friend's place in Hightstown. Enjoying their presence and fellowship, she started teaching again at one of the schools there, again making a difference in those students' lives. The school that offered her a position was the Cedarville School, which was known for housing a rough gang of boys. But as she taught those boys and the other students, they became good students and her reputation spread to nearby towns where other children were sent to her classroom. She ended up with over sixty students in her classroom.

What impressed me about her as a teacher was that she always spoke with kindness and gave the students approval of who they were. It didn't matter to her how they dressed, she respected them all the same.[11] With her teaching skills she became well known in each town she taught, and was loved by her students. As a teacher, she fought for equality of salary pay, as well as for the rights of her students to have a free education. It was the custom that the students paid the teacher's salary, but Clara could not teach her students and accept money from them. She pushed hard for public schools that were free for the students and supported by the community.[12]

Clara Barton worked very hard in her career to get to the point were people in the towns respected her and gave her the credibility she deserved. As she taught these students, the numbers grew tremendously. She could not turn students away from

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[10] Pryor, 37, 38.

[11] Pryor, 41, 42.

[12] Pryor, 51, 52.

learning. The word around town was about her work, her personality, and her style of teaching which brought many to desire learning from her. In 1853 there was an "event of the season" where the town, Bordertown, raised money to facilitate a new building called "Schoolhouse Number 1," which accommodated six hundred students. It was a dream come true for Clara Barton, but in spite of all the excitement of her career, she still stumbled over major obstacles. Politics in the school system, and a dictatorial leader named Burnham who ran the school led her to becoming drained, burned out and ill, which led her to resignation from teaching at Bordentown.[13]

In Washington

Clara Barton was disappointed that she had to leave her career behind in Bordentown. She left with feelings of failure over her ten-year teaching career. Clara Barton and her friend, Fanny Childs, made their way towards Washington to start something new for their lives. Yet, through these times of Clara's disappointment, her brother, Stephen, wrote letters to encourage her. Here is another example of a caregiver in need of support and encouragement. Stephen, Clara's brother was able to give encouragement through his letters.

Clara and her friend settled in Washington, made new friends, and started a new way of life. Clara stepped into a new career opportunity in 1854, at the patent office as an office clerk. A new friend she had met in Washington, Charles Mason, brought her on board and took care of her by giving her equal paid benefits as the rest of the male clerks

[13] Pryor, 52, 53.

in the office. She enjoyed her time there not having to deal with school politics, disagreements, and issues.[14]

This temporary position came to an end when Mason resigned and another official took over. Clara was given a major cut in pay and was now allowed to only be a copyist and work from home. When Mason later returned to his post, she was again put in an important role, yet the men harassed her and didn't like her presence in the office among them. However she rose above their unpleasant behaviors.[15] She was slandered much because it was unusual for an unmarried female and dedicated worker to be working in a man's job environment. Yet, she pushed herself to where she had many tireless nights after working at her full capabilities.[16] She had many struggles being in such an environment, yet she didn't complain much. Her brother, Stephen, begged her not to hold things inside and share her feelings with him so he could be a support for her. After yet again losing her job as a clerk, she searched for a purpose in her life.[17]

She was called back to the patent office in Washington where she once more continued her previous job. The political fever in Washington reached its highest degree with Abraham Lincoln's arrival in the city. Threats against his life and rumors of rioting had been so numerous that the lean Westerner had quietly entered the town the day before he had planned to, disguised in an old slouch hat and baggy coat. Many thought he would not live to become president, but Barton reported to her friend, Annie Childs, that the "4th of March has come and gone, and we have a live Republican President, and, what

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[14] Pryor, 55-57.

[15] Pryor, 58-60.

[16] Pryor, 61-64.

[17] Pryor, 66.

is perhaps singular, during the whole day we saw no one who appeared to manifest the least dislike to his living."[18]

Clara Barton was seeing the good in Lincoln's arrival and liked the inauguration, yet things were changing before her eyes. She was worried about her job, and she hated being so miserable at the patent office. She sensed her job was in jeopardy and those who supported her had moved on from the office so that she was left without any support. She realized that she needed to make friends with the Republican members since she didn't have any in her circle of life. So she decided to search for those who would hear her and could become her good supporters, for her future was at stake.[19]

One of the Republicans that Clara decided to befriend was Henry Wilson. Her cousin, Elvira, knew Wilson, but instead of asking personal favors from her cousin, Clara decided to go in person and meet with him at the Capitol. On a cold afternoon she went by herself to "speak to the senate about the generally crowded and overworked conditions of the patent office, in which she knew he had an interest."[20] Scarcely had Clara called Wilson out of the Senate chambers than "he set away his hat, arranged his coat sleeves, and settled himself into a conversable posture which seemed to say 'let us talk, I am ready', and we did talk."[21] This was the start of Clara gaining a supportive relationship which grew stronger as years went by. Wilson was a powerful man, a good politician, and respected by Mr. Lincoln.[22]

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[18] Pryor, 75.

[19] Pryor, 75.

[20] Pryor, 75.

[21] Pryor, 75.

[22] Pryor, 76.

Clara had no idea how much her acquaintance with Wilson would benefit her in the future, but she was glad that her job was now secure at the patent office. The men seemed more receptive of a female presence at the office. Clara turned her focus towards helping others who were facing hard challenges. "There were many who were impressed with the tireless energy she had at this time for the problems and sorrows of her friends, acquaintances, and relatives."[23]

Henry Wilson was one major individual supporter who gave her counsel and support throughout her life. The Senator from Massachusetts was born February 16, 1812, and learned shoemaking when he moved to Natick in 1833.[24] "He was elected U.S. Senator in 1855 where he served until 1873, then elected Vice President of the United States on the Republican ticket with Ulysses S. Grant. While in the Senate, he served as chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs and the Militia."[25]

As was mentioned earlier, Clara was an unselfish person. She would often vouch for others and help those in need, often putting forth great efforts and energy towards people's problems. Her passion for helping others was impressive, but when a caretaker helps others and receives little or no support, they may burn out, as Clara often did.

When the Civil War broke out in the United States, Clara was there helping the wounded soldiers. She started by collecting items from her neighborhood such as food, old sheets, towels, and other things that the soldiers might need, and then she would personally care for the wounded soldiers. She worked hard to care for them for a couple of reasons. First, as a duty to her country and second, to her father's memory, for she

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[23] Pryor, 76.

[24] Pryor, 76.

[25] Pryor, 76.

remembered her father's precious stories about him serving time as a soldier. This brought Clara a sense of overwhelming peace as she helped many get well. As she provided help and assistance, she would also provide water and words of hope to the soldiers. Clara was known as an angel in the field as she helped the wounded soldiers, and spent many hours providing supplies for their survival.

Clara was an amazing soul who gave all to the needy and spent countless hours with those who were suffering, holding their hands or providing a word of encouragement. Pryor summed up Clara's care well, "She shared with the soldiers a bone-weariness, and like them she spent the dreary months living on memories of the past and expectation for the spring campaigns. She had neglected herself, her clothes, and her surroundings, but those seemed of small consequence after the privation she had witnessed. Indeed, she wore her shabby dress with pride, feeling it was one more link between her and the tattered foot soldiers."[26] I was awestruck by her deep care for people. Her life is an amazing illustration of how one person did so much to help so many people throughout the war. Her life of service was not a rosy adventure; in fact she pushed through many obstacles to accomplish her goals in assisting the soldiers through their worst times.

"As the Civil War drew to a close, Clara Barton was not ready to end her war work. She loved being useful and serving those in need. She had to find a new way to help. Her solution was to create the Missing Soldiers Office. Tens of thousands of men were missing. Their friends and families wrote to Clara, asking, 'Have you seen Wilber? Joseph? Thomas?' Clara Barton and her small staff received over 63,000 requests for

[26] Pryor, 108.

help. They were able to locate over 22,000 men, some of whom were still alive."[27] Clara had a deep love and compassion, a nurse's heart, and always wanted to help others in need. She felt fulfillment when she was valued and needed. She came up with ideas where she could be helpful and make a difference in other's lives.

"In 1868, Clara was exhausted from years of working for soldiers. Her doctors recommended she go to Europe to rest, so Clara packed up her things—leaving many of them in the attic of her boarding house rooms—and headed off for Europe and a break. When Clara got to Europe, she didn't relax. Instead, she met representatives from the International Red Cross who inspired her to found the American Red Cross. However, before returning to the states, Clara provided nursing and humanitarian assistance during the Franco-Prussian War."[28] Clara gave of herself so selflessly to help and bless the soldiers that she burned out and needed rest. This is true of anyone who is in self-care, without proper rest, support, and rejuvenation, burn out would be the sure result.

Supporters of Clara Barton

Clara was such an inspiration to many individuals, and received many letters regarding how she helped and made a difference in many lives. With cherished moments like these she was able to further her work as a servant for the people. She was hero for many, and an angel to those that needed hope to be restored.

Clara never gave up her work even when she was told to go and gain strength, take care of her exhausted soul. She was always thinking of others and putting them first.

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[27] "Biography," Clara Barton Museum, accessed June 20, 2018, http://www.clarabartonmuseum.org/bio/.

[28] Clara Barton Museum, "Biography."

She had friends and mentors in her life who spoke the truth by encouraging her in her lifetime. She wore many hats in her lifetime such as a teacher, helping others like a nurse, helping with relief disaster occasions, fighting for human rights, fighting for equal opportunities and much more.[29] All these she could not do if she didn't have the support that she had in her life, the people who cared for her.

Her main supporter was Henry Wilson, (nicknamed Natick Cobbler), the Republican Senator (1854-73) from Massachusetts. "Possessed of strong principles and a strong character, he chaired the 1852 national Free Soil Convention. Like fellow Massachusetts Senator Charles Sumner, Wilson was a strong abolitionist. He was ardent and outspoken in support of emancipation and Black civil liberties – but politically in advance of both his constituents and the Lincoln Administration."[30]

Henry Wilson became friends with Clara Barton and her family through his years of duty. Because of Wilson's significant support for Clara, she shared with him her discouragement and darkest moments of her life. Wilson was there for Clara by listening to her needs and encouraging her through her disappointments and struggles. He became a friend of the family as well, and Clara became like a sister to him after her brother died. Wilson was a tremendous support to Clara when she needed it the most; she opened her life situations to him as she was desperately searching for someone to console her. He was there for her and helped her become able to serve the wounded soldiers. He made a way for her brother David to become a captain in the quartermaster so Clara could have a

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[29] Clara Barton Museum, "Biography."

[30] "Visitors From Congress: Henry Wilson," Mr. Lincoln's White House, accessed June 20, 2018, http://www.mrlincolnswhitehouse.org/residents-visitors/visitors-from-congress/visitors-congress-henry-wilson-1812-1875.

way in to serve the wounded. Wilson and Barton had many things in common such as their liberal values and faith in the Republican party.[31]

Some have thought that perhaps Clara would end up marrying someone like Wilson. Though Clara was short, standing exactly at five feet tall, she was "slender and attractive, with a round face, high cheekbones, a tiny cleft in her chin, a warm and pleasant smile, dark, gleaming eyes and long brown hair that she characteristically wore parted in the middle and pulled back."[32] And even though Clara would often have men that wanted to marry her, she never did get married. "On principle she remained unmarried and turned away the few marriage proposals she received."[33]

Caring for others is a good thing but caregivers need someone who can support them along the way, just like Wilson took care of Clara and gave her words of encouragement. The work that Clara did was with full dedication from her heart. Such work takes courage and exhausting energy to be able to serve and care for those suffering and sick. In the same way, nurses today give, provide, heal, give sips of water, medicine, console with encouraging words, and much more. That's why they need support and to have a strong shoulder for them just as Henry Wilson provided that support for Clara. Wilson uplifted her many times as she felt sick and vulnerable. She was determined and willing to make a difference, to wipe tears, to feed the poor, to cover the wounds, to fight for her rights and the rights of others. She was a woman who made people feel strong and encouraged by what she did and what we can do. A life of strong determination is what Clara was about, and I believe that I can be like her in being there for people but also be

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[31] Mr. Lincoln's White House, "Visitors From Congress: Henry Wilson."

[32] Glenn W. LaFantasie, "The Trials Clara Barton and Triumphs," *America's Civil War*. May 2005, Vol. 18 Issue 2, p. 38.

[33] LaFantasie, 37.

in need of providing support to those who are caretakers. Nurses today need to be uplifted as they take care of others. They meet so much sadness, suffering, and bad news that they carry on their shoulders, and if they do not receive support, they will exhaust themselves through illness and despair. The lack of support and exhaustion is why many nurses change careers.

Taking Clara under his wings was a big task for Wilson because he was aware of the good that she was doing. Wilson would receive letters from Clara with reports of the wounded soldiers' status and the ongoing abuse taking place. She could not rest seeing the unjust actions which were taking place. After Wilson heard of Clara's stories of the soldiers' misery and cruelty he would come to her rescue and make investigations resulting in changes for the lives of the starving, suffering soldiers. Through letters Clara would contact friends and clergy, begging for food for the soldiers who were lying on a hotel floor in starvation and thirst. She could not resist their requests for crackers and coffee which at times was all she had to give them. Many times she didn't even have a cup of water to offer the thirsty soldiers.[34]

Through the years that Clara cared for those in need, whether they were children, soldiers, or the suffering, what devastated her the most was the loss of loved ones. Grieving after her sister, Sally, passed away took a large toll on her soul. Then she later heard of her dearest friend, Henry Wilson's death, that took place on February 22, 1875. This sad news made her so physically sick that she was admitted into a sanitarium in New York for healing and recovery. [35]

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[34] Blanche Colton Williams, *Clara Barton Daughter of Destiny* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1941), 108.

[35] Williams, 220-221.

Few were able to support her as Wilson was able to support her, in part because he understood her, listened to her. "They had worked together throughout the Civil War; they understood each other; she was proud of him for having understood the measure for restoration of rights to the Confederate States; she knew he admired her as she admired him; she had rejoiced to meet him again—and finally—in the chair of the Vice President."[36] Clara not only admired Wilson as a big brother, but even had feelings for him. She had hoped to one day marry Henry Wilson, yet his untimely death dashed her dreams of spending the rest of her life with him.[37] She was distraught and discouraged, and was fortunate to enter the sanitarium in New York where she recuperated from her great grief.[38]

Conclusion

Clara is not so much remembered today as a teacher, or caretaker of wounded soldiers, but for founding the American Red Cross. Just to consider that we would not have the American Red Cross if it would not be for Clara Barton. But would Clara have founded the American Red Cross if she would not have received the support and encouragement along the way? We do not know the answer to that question, yet what we do know is that Clara had a deep, compassionate heart to help everyone around her. At times because of her caring heart, she would be taken advantage of, or taken for granted and not appreciated. Her goal in founding the American Red Cross was that it would be an organization which would respond to natural disasters in addition to war. As we

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[36] Williams, 221.

[37] Clara Barton Museum, "Biography."

[38] Williams, 225.

consider the American Red Cross today, it is doing so much good all over the world, helping so many people. It is definitely continuing the legacy of Clara Barton.

As we consider just recent disasters that the American Red Cross has reached out and helped victims, it is astounding to consider that all this began from one woman's vision. Below is the list of nine disasters that the American Red Cross has provided the most amount of financial help.

- September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the Red Cross has provided $402.8 million to date. The money has helped the families of victims who have worked in the World Trade Center. Individuals who have survived and have been unemployed, as well as individuals who have helped with the clean up of Ground Zero.
- Hurricane Georges, $101 million provided by the American Red Cross. This hurricane has struck the Florida Keys as well as the coasts of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi in September 1998.
- Hurricane Andrew, $81 million provided by the American Red Cross. This hurricane devastated southeast Florida, as well as southern Louisiana in August 1992.
- Hurricane Hugo, $68 million provided by the American Red Cross. Hurricane Hugo slammed into South Carolina and North Carolina in September 1989.
- Midwest Floods, $44 million provided by the American Red Cross. In the summer of 1993, these floods became to be known as the "Flood of the Century." The Red Cross provided and operated shelters in nine states as the rivers rose of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers.

- Northridge, California earthquake, $35 million provided by the American Red Cross. On January 17, 1994, an early-morning earthquake shook northern Los Angeles. This earthquake registered 6.7 on the Richter scale and caused more than $15 billion in property damage.
- Hurricane Floyd, $32.9 million provided by the American Red Cross. Hurricane Floyd came through North Carolina in September 1999 and caused massive flooding. This massive flooding devastated the agriculture and livestock industries, causing the nation's largest peacetime evacuation.
- Tropical Storm Allison, $31.3 million provided by the American Red Cross. Torrential rains from this tropical storm flooded downtown Houston, Texas from June 5-8, 2001.
- Hurricane Marilyn, $29.6 million provided by the American Red Cross as Hurricane Marilyn devastated the U.S. Virgin Islands in September 1995.[39]

When we consider just the top nine disasters that the American Red Cross has donated to in the last decade, the amount comes to $825.6 million dollars. But the dollar figure does not compare to the victims and individuals that have been clothed, helped, fed, and supported as they have experienced loss and devastation. If Clara would be alive to see all that the American Red Cross is accomplishing today and has accomplished up to this point. Her heart would be filled with hope and thankfulness for the opportunity of starting an organization that helps so many.

"Clara also advocated for America to ratify the Geneva Convention. Clara worked tirelessly to serve others for the rest of her life. She responded to the Johnstown Flood

[39] Lisa Chambers, "Fearless Under Fire," *Biography*. Apr. 2002, Vol. 6, Issue 4, p. 67.

and the Galveston Hurricane, she even helped out in Armenia and Cuba. She served as president of the American Red Cross until 1904, when at the age of eighty-two she resigned, then started the National First Aid Association of America. At the age of ninety, Clara Barton died in her home in Glen Echo, Maryland in 1912. Today, we celebrate her legacy and tell her story."[40] I think of Clara as one who devoted her soul to helping others, for her strong dedication, and for her willingness to be present to many who were suffering.

I think of the nurses at SV, seeing them always so eager to give of themselves for the sick on daily basis and how much that drains one's emotional energy. I find it an important necessity in caring for nurses and by reminding them of the importance of self-care. Therefore, striving to provide food, strong support, and words of encouragement is truly necessary to support our staff so that they can feel cared for and continue to give their best to our patients.

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[40] Clara Barton Museum, "Biography."

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The ministry of caring for caretakers is vitally essential in ministry. Yet caring for caretakers is usually overlooked and overseen by others. The purpose of this paper is to explore the theology of the trinity and how it relates to pastoral care and how pastoral care is an important part of caring for caretakers. I will first look at the theology of the trinity and continue with the history of Christian faith and the importance of soul caring in the Christian life, followed by exploring the reasons for good pastoral care and need of soul searching in our personal lives with God and with our relationships with others. I shall explore the importance of God being the central focus of each one of our lives, and how one can serve God and others better in the context of ministry. Lastly, I will also take a look at the importance of pastoral care to the human soul and the benefits that gives to everyone involved.

The Trinity

The Godhead, or triune God of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is revealed in Scripture as a relational God. Tyron Inbody affirms the fact that when one thinks of the triune God, one is reminded of the stories of creation and redemption found in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. "The Trinity is a summary of the Bible's testimony to God's

love in the covenant with Israel and the incarnation in Jesus Christ."[1] What this means is that God may be known, God may be known through Scripture. "God, in His love and compassion, reached out to us through the Bible."[2] One may know God through the in-depth study of the Bible.

God also personally comes to each one of us, to be known by those created in God's image. "…there is a great difference between knowing God and possessing propositional knowledge of God."[3] What Stanley Grenz means by that statement is that there is a difference between knowing about God and knowing God personally, intimately. And if a person only knew about God from others such as preachers, teachers, or reading of the Bible without knowing God personally, then that person really does not know God at all. "True knowledge of God, in contrast, can arise only from an encounter with God."[4] The purpose of the revelation of God in Scripture is not only to know facts about God but to come to know God, to encounter God personally. Grenz states it so well, "God's primary concern in revelation is not simply that we be able to formulate propositions concerning his eternal being. God's intent is that we understand who he is as the eternally relational, triune God and who he is in relationship to the world he has made, in order that we may enter into fellowship with him. Revelation, therefore, is the self-disclosure of God-in-relation."[5]

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[1] Tyron Inbody, *The Faith of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 103.

[2] *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* 2nd ed. (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2005), 24.

[3] Stanley J. Grenz, *Theology for the Community of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 49.

[4] Grenz, 49.

[5] Grenz, 81.

The reality is that even when one encounters God personally, there still lies a large mystery about the triune God. "Although humanity has penetrated some levels of the divine mystery and has even codified them, the larger mystery still remains."[6] One is not to be discouraged regarding the fact that the triune God is enshrouded in this great mystery. There is still good news; "Although it is impossible to know God completely, the Scriptures afford a practical knowledge of Him that is sufficient for us to enter into a saving relationship with Him."[7] In another words, one's encounter with God personally is strong enough and deep enough to experience a saving relationship. Humans do not have to stay in the dark regarding the triune God, even though mystery still abounds.

What may be known regarding God though, is that God is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent.[8] Grenz continues to explain God as transcendent, that is "self-sufficient apart from the world," and "immanent in the world," that is involved in the creation God created.[9] "God is the everlasting intercommunion between the persons of the Godhead. And God's relationship to the world is internal to the divine life, since the everlasting life of God is personal life in relationship."[10] The triune God has this deep relationship within the Trinity and also with each one created in God's image.

The triune God's relationship with the created world is revealed through God's actions, care, and love for all creation. The apostle Paul speaking regarding the relational God states, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of

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[6] Woodrow Whidden, Jerry Moon, and John W. Reeve, *The Trinity* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2002), 159.

[7] *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* 2nd ed., 24.

[8] Grenz, 92.

[9] Grenz, 81.

[10] Inbody, 105.

the Holy Spirit be with all of you" (2 Corinthians 13:13, NRSV). Paul relates the work of grace to the incarnational ministry of Jesus. Paul then relates love to the ministry of the Father. In conclusion he relates the ministry of the Holy Spirit to the gift of communion and fellowship.

Paul personally encountered Jesus and in his encounter with Jesus, he states that he has experienced grace. "I am grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because he judged me faithful and appointed me to his service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and man of violence. But I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 1:12-14, NRSV). Paul, in his ignorance, thinking that he was doing God's will, was actually hindering God's work by persecuting God's faithful. God did not destroy Paul, but chose to reveal himself through Christ and Christ offered grace to Paul. It is not punishment that Paul is in need of, "he doesn't know it yet, but grace is exactly what he needs."[11] And grace is what Jesus offers Paul, and he in return accepts the gift of grace and ends up preaching and teaching grace everywhere he traveled. Through the life of Paul one can understand God's care for each human being. God is not out to punish us, but to care for us and extend grace through the incarnational ministry of Jesus Christ. For one may experience grace through the life, death, and the living resurrected Christ every moment and every day of life.

But it is not only the gift of grace that flow from the triune God, but Paul earlier writes that love comes from God the Father. The disciple John reminds us, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not

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[11] Stuart Tyner, *Searching for the God of Grace* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2006), 103.

perish but may have eternal life" (John 3:16, NRSV). It is because God the Father loves so deeply that all the divine gifts are received. "God's communicable attributes flow from His loving concern for humanity. They include love (Rom. 5:8), grace (Rom. 3:24), mercy (Ps. 145:9), patience (2 Peter 3:14, NIV), holiness (Ps. 99:9), righteousness (Ezra 9:15; John 17:25), justice (Rev. 22:12), and truth (1 John 5:20). These gifts come only with the Giver Himself."[12] What is amazing about God's gifts is that they are not just helpful, powerful, and needed, but that one encounters God and receives God's presence with the gift. "It is only as God shares with us His own essence—love—that we are able to engage in the work of the triune God in the world. This He does through the Holy Spirit who dwells within God's people."[13] Grenz with Paul remind that the communication and fellowship of God's love is experienced through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus also reminded His disciples that after He would depart back to the Father, the Holy Spirit would be sent that their connection with the triune God would continue. "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you" (John 14:16-17, NRSV). Just as Jesus was sent to be our first Advocate, the Holy Spirit comes to be our second Advocate, not only to remain in communion with the triune God but also to commune and care for one another.

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[12] *Seventh-day Adventists Believe* 2nd ed., 27.

[13] Grenz, 97.

Soul Care in the Christian Life

God lovingly created each human being to be connected with Him and God designed them to flourish in life by being connected not only to Him but to be connected to one another. As God calls one to be a minister in His service, one often first realizes the need of God in the life and the importance of soul care while ministering to others. This means that as one serves others, it is God and not others that becomes the center of our lives. "God's official centrality to human life is also uniquely understood in the ancient biblical teaching that humans are made in God's image (Gen. 1:27; 9:6)."[14]

Since people are made in God's image and God is a relational God, that means that "humans are intrinsically and fundamentally relational."[15] This in a sense makes humans "replicas of the original."[16] To be "replicas of the original," means that humans are made in His image and are designed to have that internal desire towards Him and relationships with others. God designed humans to be like Him relationally. He designed them to have a strong and healthy relationship with Him and to offer their kindness to human beings, as well as to have a close communion with others. "The universal person of God does not think of people as isolated individual beings, but in a natural state of communion with other human beings… God does not desire a history of individual human beings, but the history of the human *community*.[17]

Therefore, pastoral care first begins with God as Creator and God as center of one's life. "Humans are needy beings, for they need to love and be loved by that

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[14] Eric L. Johnson, *God & Soul Care* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), 31.

[15] Johnson, 31.

[16] Johnson, 31.

[17] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Sanctorum Communio,* trans. Reinhard Krauss and Nancy Lukens (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1998), 79, 80.

infinitely greatest being. Only that reality is enough to fully satisfy the human soul."[18] Unfortunately many times God is not the center of pastoral care but because people are created and loved by God, they ought to have God in the center of our lives and share that love with others. They are to be empowering and sharing God's filled cup of mercy and love with others, but before they share God's filled cup with others, they need to allow God to fill their cups with mercy and love.

A Christian's life is about having God's happiness and as his disciples, are to follow Him and his calling for one's life. Our journey is to share God's love with others, and allow the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us as we go forth in His mission. "God is the greatest being in the universe and is so worthy of our praise. But one of the most amazing parts of his doxological agenda is his desire to bring us into his glory, love and happiness. The Christian life is designed to be a journey into glory."[19] As M. S. Sherwin put it, 'Ultimately, God is our happiness.'[20]

God's desire is for humans to flourish in the love and happiness He provides by dwelling in the center of their souls. Christians ought to immerse themselves daily in God's love by spending time with the Lord and Savior, Jesus, in order to be able to serve others for His glory. "The triune God's nature is expressed in his entire therapeutic program to bring sinful and broken humans into His communion. 'Redemption is rooted in the restoration of relationships that takes place as humankind is drawn into Jesus' relationship with the Father in their Spirit.'(McIntosh, 2004, p. 33). Christian soul-care providers are to practice with that same passion, helping others learn how to receive and

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[18] Johnson, 31.

[19] Johnson, 45.

[20] M.S. Sherwin, *By knowledge & by love: Charity and knowledge in the moral theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 81.

participate in it by faith."[21] The key word for pastoral care is relationships, relationship with God first and then relationships with others.

Through communion with God and the Holy Spirit, the caregiver feels moved and filled with deep compassion and His presence in life. One's actions and emotions then can speak of His love to others and it can better equip for ministry. Intimacy with God becomes a priority in daily lives so many are impacted for the kingdom of God. A genuine communion with God creates a personal and unique bond, a real friendship with our Creator that gives us a lasting joy and affirmation in our growing faith. A good pastoral care ministry is where one finds this affirmation in the soul and notices these valuable things in life to be able to serve better.

God designed caregivers not only to have a close communion with him but to also have deep relationships and bonds with others in life. "Remarkably, God Himself told Adam it was not good for him to be alone, while God was with him (Gen. 2:18)! Human relationships, therefore, are essential to human flourishing, as well as soul healing, and they are intended by God to be complementary to and reflective of our relationship with him."[22] It is interesting to note that Adam was not really alone, for God was with him. Adam had a relationship with God, but yet he was alone, for Adam did not have a human companion. It is not enough to have a relationship with God; one needs to foster human relations as well.

Caregivers need to be loving and graceful with one another by sharing God's love with each other. They also need to be caring human beings and take time for others in offering them love, a good listening ear, by being authentic, being there for each other in

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[21] Johnson, 64

[22] Johnson, 66.

our struggles, encouraging one another, building each other up, and having meaningful dialogues. This is how pastoral care is practiced, leading to good soul caring for others and oneself. By growing closer with each other, caregivers grow even closer to God and this connection with God and others creates unity between Christian believers.

Reasons for Pastoral Care

When caregivers offer pastoral care gifts to the community they become more like Christ and there is a unity between one another. One part of pastoral care is to bring healing to the people around by practicing compassion and genuine care towards those that are truly suffering. Pastoral care may be practiced in a variety of places like churches, homes, or in hospitals where ministers can bring comfort and soul healing to the people. "Much of pastoral work is concerned with promoting the psychospiritual well-being of God's people, whether preaching, visiting, administering the ordinances, or conducting weddings, funerals, in addition to the most obvious soul-care task of counseling."[23] There is no special place where pastoral care is to be practiced, what is important is the quality of the pastoral care, as mentioned in the quote above, the promoting of the "psychospiritual well-being of God's people."

Pastoral care has many roles but one important role is that of being the shepherd of the soul, leading, and guiding individuals towards a closer walk with the Lord. Another important factor of spiritual care is the significance of soul-care of the people, emotionally and physically, and being able to be walking with them through their journey. And when the precious moments are shared through such sacred stories of one's life, it is an opportunity to practice pastoral care.

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[23] Johnson, 453.

Yet in order for people to openly share, they need to know and feel that they are accepted, loved, and not judged by the listener. "The Christian community needs such compassionate leaders who have great capacity to accept others as they are, in spite of their brokenness and sin, who can recognize defensive activity, tolerate strong emotion (or no emotion) in others, interpret the nuances of emotion expression and the presence of unconscious dynamics due to early trauma, skills that can develop only after years of training, experience working with others, and, usually, self-understanding."[24]

In pastoral care there are other components that are vitally important for a caregiver to have than just competency and skills. For example, compassion for souls is an important component, as well as self-understanding. A reason self-understanding is important is because offering compassion can be emotionally draining. Having self-understanding, knowing how much to offer and when to offer self-care in order not to burnout or take too much upon one's self is important to discern. God gives gifts in the ministry for us to use, however if we use them in an unhealthy way it will hinder our ministry and could turn into a curse and not a blessing.

Spiritual care is to help people give their burdens to Jesus and not to try to carry other people's burdens ourselves. "Christian spiritual care means facilitating a person's relationship with God through Jesus Christ… Spiritual care means putting people in touch with God through compassionate presence, active listening, witness, prayer, Bible reading and partnering with the body of Christ."[25] A good pastoral care is when the caregiver is making a difference in ones life through small kind gestures, such as a smile,

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[24] Johnson, 457.

[25] Judith Allen Shelly and Arlene B. Miller, *Called to Care: A Christian Worldview for Nursing* 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic Second addition 2006. Downers Grove, IL), 264.

gentle touch, offering an open heart in listening and comforting. It is bringing God's presence, giving hope to the hopeless, expressing empathy and entering that sacred moment with the sufferer. But all that is done without trying to become the savior of the person, but rather bringing the person to Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

A good, compassionate presence is described as follows in the story of Elijah. "When the prophet Elijah ran form those who were persecuted him, he became exhausted, depressed and a bit paranoid, God sent him an angel, who 'touched him' and then told him to 'get up and eat' the food prepared for him (1 Kings 19:5). The angel persisted, coming repeatedly, constantly assessing and meeting Elijah's physical, emotional and spiritual needs.[26] One ought to be like the angel in Elijah's story, to offer compassionate care, and be present for those that are in need of emotional and spiritual care. As Elijah felt exhausted and depressed, caregivers at times may meet someone who is exhausted, depressed, and emotionally spent. They have the opportunity then to be compassionate helpers in helping restore hope and strength through encouragement and pastoral care.

Pastoral care has another important aspect in compassionate giving. It is listening well to the individual in order to access their needs so proper assistance is provided in areas that are needed. For example, by practicing good listening skills you will identify which area to focus on when doing pastoral care, either spiritual or emotional need. Effective ministry is possible when caregivers listen well to those that are in need of pastoral care.

Emma J. Justes in her book *Hearing Beyond the Words: How to become good listening Pastor* explains in chapter one of her book that listening is practicing great hospitality. "Humility allows one to offer service to another through hospitality and to do

[26] Shelly and Miller, 265.

so without devaluing oneself".[27] Often humility is viewed as putting oneself down in order to lift up the other person, or thinking less of self. But Justes says that "humility, rather than diminishing oneself, offers a 'right way' of seeing oneself that is required or providing appropriate hospitality".[28] Justes' definition on humility is a powerful statement of what true humility is. Too often humility is understood as putting oneself down and making self look insignificant and small, but rather humility is a healthy understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses.

In chapter two, Justes develops the theme of listening further. She states, "I used to shudder at the mention of humility or the suggestion of being humble because I heard it as indicative of groveling, diminishing oneself, becoming a doormat for others a diminished self is not what humility is about."[29] She goes on to write, "Appropriate self-awareness requires that we be honest with ourselves."[30]

Earlier I discussed the importance of self-understanding, Justes also does a good job of showing the extremes of a lack of self-awareness. "Thinking we are 'all that,' we see no need to receive from others. Thinking that we are nothing, we find ourselves unworthy to receive from others".[31] That is why appropriate self-awareness is important, so caregivers understand self and know how to help and practice pastoral care. "Honest self-assessment and accurate humility are more likely to allow us to receive blessings

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[27] Emma J. Justes, *Hearing Beyond the Words: How to Become Good Listening Pastor* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), chap. 1, Kindle.

[28] Justes, chap. 1, Kindle.

[29] Justes, chap. 2, Kindle.

[30] Justes, chap. 2, Kindle.

[31] Justes, chap. 2, Kindle.

from others and form a strong basis for community."[32] Justes also explains that good listening does not only include listening with our ears but also includes listening with the eyes, looking carefully at what is said through posture, movements, and expressions. Justes states that listening is not only the words being said but to the meanings that are "conveyed in expressions, tones, gestures, and body language."[33] She goes on to write that, "Listening goes beyond what the ears can receive. We constantly express ourselves in ways that words do not convey. Very subtle tones, expression, and movement communicate to us, sometimes below the surface of our awareness."[34]

Another aspect of effective listening includes vulnerability. The individual speaking, opening up, in need of hospitality is already in a position of vulnerability. But Justes makes the point that the host, the listener ought to also be in a position of vulnerability in order to listen effectively. "In acts of listening, as in acts of hospitality, host and guest, listener and speaker must open to each other for hospitality or listening to occur. A potential host unwilling to be vulnerable will not be able to offer hospitality."[35] This thought on vulnerability is helpful for pastoral care, so that the listener also is vulnerable in their listening and not just pretending to listen. One must realize that even as a listener, one must show hospitality by being open, transparent, and vulnerable in order to listen well and be able to offer hospitality effectively. And of course, trust, assurance of confidentiality, and privacy need to be offered, so the person can feel open and transparent in their sharing.

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[32] Justes, chap. 2, Kindle.

[33] Justes, chap. 3, Kindle.

[34] Justes, chap. 3, Kindle.

[35] Justes, chap. 4, Kindle.

I like how Justes describes that in effective listening there is the presence of God. And the true happiness comes when I offer myself to the vulnerable and recognize that I am God's vessel and am created to do what he intended me to do. And "the discovery that Jesus becomes our guest when we offer hospitality to 'the least of these' is an expression of this reciprocity."[36] One must recognize that God's presence goes with them, as one offers compassion in effective listening. If one is to show Christ to others and recognize Christ's presence in conversations, then true hospitality must be part of caregivers lives. And true hospitality happens when one listens well. In effective pastoral care, one must offer full attention to others in those sacred moments that are shared, so one can allow the Holy Spirit to work within them and through them for effective ministry.

Pastoral Care in the Hospital Setting

When considering looking at pastoral care in the hospital setting, I see a great benefit for such a support to exist for the staff, especially the nurses. "The essence of nursing is caring-nurturing others to promote well-being and providing support to those whose wellness is compromised. To do such work effectively, one must feel concern and compassion for others. For many nurses, this motivation to assist others arises their spiritual care and reflects a need to give love."[37] Nurses can benefit from pastoral care in many ways, for example they could benefit personally for themselves so they can be encouraged and nurtured, cared for, listened to, and admired. In order that they could then

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[36] Justes, chap. 5, Kindle.

[37] Elizabeth J. Taylor, *Spiritual Care, Nursing Theory, Research, and Practice* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 2002), 33.

in turn give effective care for their patients. As nurses are being provided spiritual support in the hospitals they get encouraged and in return share that joy with their patients and are able to provide a holistic care to the patient with more care and support. Every person needs to be cared for and loved, understood, listened, and valued, this is especially true of caregivers, who give so much of themselves in caring for others. In a hospital setting, spiritual care is present for the nurses, first for themselves, but then also to help them see the important components for the patient's inner desires and needs as they are recovering in a hospital bed. It is very important for spiritual care to be present in hospitals for all the patients to provide that needed support, especially after a crisis or diagnosis where one is faced with devastating news and there is no one to talk to and process through the experience. Pastoral care is there to help the nurses through those dramatic experiences and to help the patients understand more fully the meaning of life and help them come to their own conclusions of life.

When patients come to the hospital and perhaps face a diagnosis or a traumatic event in their lives, this is when they might be thinking of their spiritual life and think of past experiences and regrets. Many times there is the self-realization and a desire to make changes in life. "Nurses see to assist clients to achieve quality of life, improve hardiness, attain psychosocial adjustment, and reduce anxiety and loneliness. Spiritual well being and other aspects of spirituality appear to enhance these outcomes. Research demonstrates that spiritual variables are linked to other phenomena that determine quality of life. Examples of studies that support such linkages include the following, which suggest a positive correlation between a sense of spiritual well being and: Quality of life, fighting spirit, 'hope, and decreases negative mood states among persons experiencing

cancer (e. g., Cotton, Levine. Fitzpatrickm Kold, & Targ, 1999; Fehring, Miller, & Shaw, 1997).'"[38]

The well being of a person consists of mental, physical, and the emotional components and when there is the positive interaction with pastoral care and physical care, there is inner healing that takes place in one's life. Nurses in the hospitals can help assess any spiritual need for their patients by listening and having verbal/non-verbal communication and body language, so they can further address these observations with the hospital chaplain. By collaborating with pastoral care and taking the time to assess the patient's needs and evaluating the situation it will help the patient and the nurse in the wholeness of care. It may also actually help the nurse make a self-assessment of his/her spiritual need in their lives.

One way to define pastoral care in the hospitals, "Pastoral care is a supportive ministry to people and those close to them who are experiencing the familiar trials that characterize life in this world, such illness, surgery, incapacitation, death and bereavement."[39] Kirkwood quotes Alister Campbell when he defines what pastoral care is, that pastoral care is "pastoral relationship,"[40] and that this "is the key by which we enter the world of the person."[41] Kirkwood goes on to say that the chaplain enters into a caring relationship with the patient by one who is motivated by the relationship with God. Then, later in the chapter Kirkwood writes that there are three basis needs that the patient desires/needs during their hospital stay, which is "to be restored to health, feel cared for

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[38] Taylor, 45.

[39] Neville A. Kirkwood, *Pastoral Care in Hospitals* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1995), 13.

[40] Kirkwood, 13.

[41] Kirkwood, 13.

and to be reassured."[42] Restoration takes place in the patient's inner soul when they have a vision or a goal in their life regardless of the circumstance of their situation. They need to feel valued, and this is possible when they may recall many positive experiences like holidays, careers, accomplishments, and positive family memories. The restoration part will enhance their inner ability towards a quicker recovery. It is helpful to be reassuring to the patient, uplifting their spirits and letting them know that they are respected and bring positiveness in the medical care as a whole. The patient needs reassurance through a gentle approach through which they may experience the love and care of God; delivering gentle approach to fostering as awareness of our loving, caring God can bring the reassurance the patient needs.[43]

Pastoral care ministry provided in the hospitals, are noted to be very delicate shared moments, that enter sacredness in the times of visiting with patients or nurses. Those sacred moments should be considered very important and not to be interrupted by other staff. Pastoral care also is there to provide religious rituals for those in need, for example rituals and symbols may bring great meaning and healing to some individuals. "Rituals allow people to shape, express, and maintain relationship. Rituals make change feel manageable and safe, enable healing by helping people to recover form betrayals, traumas, or losses. Rituals allow individuals to express their beliefs and make sense of them. Rituals allow people to celebrate by helping them affirm deep joys and honor life with festivity."[44]

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[42] Kirkwood, 19.

[43] Kirkwood, 21.

[44] Kirkwood, 203.

The great importance of pastoral care ministry in a hospital setting is to really consider ahead of time the purpose and goal of the visit; being able to learn to observe the unspoken, being able to read non-verbal cues, seeing the warm smile, paying attention to the tone of voice, and more importantly knowing when the patient is open and willing to accept visitors. There is another opportunity that can be a healing process, which can be provided by pastoral care to the patients and nurses. It is called the "storytelling's healing effects," which allows the individual to share their past stories and experience positive feelings in order to cope better with present situations. This process helps and reduces stress and anxiety for the patient who is sharing their story. "Story telling is also a way of connecting with others, a concrete way to give and receive love. Stories also provide a mechanism for transmitting values and sharing in a way that leaves a legacy. When people tell a story, they transmit meanings that they ascribe to life experiences. To facilitate storytelling, therefore, is to support the process of meaning making, self-understanding, and connecting to others-all of which address spiritual needs."[45]

A meditation prayer written by Marion Woodman is both encouraging and helpful in understanding the power of shared stories. "In finding our own story, we assemble all the parts of ourselves. Whatever kind of mess we have made of it, we can somehow see the totality of who we are and recognize how our blunderings are related. We can own what we did and value who we are, not because of the outcome, but because of the soul story that propelled us."[46]

Pastoral care or spiritual care offered in the medical environment is very essential both for the patient and the nurse, it starts by listening to the shared stories and being

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[45] Kirkwood, 268.

[46] Gail Straub, *Circle of Compassion* (Boston, MA: Journey Editions, 2001), 72.

present in the moment of each individual. "Hearing the story and being present through the suffering are rituals that can sustain and enable medicine as ministry in crucial ways. There are many others of importance, like medical rituals of the laying on of hands in the physical examination, ministering rituals of visitation and providing for the families of the ill. All of these find their roots and their meanings in the primary rituals of the Christian community; the rite of communion, the Eucharist."[47]

In pastoral care it is important to relate to people in a sensitive way by asking them open-ended questions for allowing space in how they choose to respond. "Those who are suffering are very vulnerable. It's as though they have been stamped FRAGILE, HANDLE WITH CARE. Because suffering people are so fragile, those who relate to them are called upon to function with the greatest sensitivity and compassion they can muster."[48]

It is hard to know what to say to a person when they might be suffering or if they experience a loss or trauma of a loved one. Often we stay away from those who are suffering tremendously, choosing to avoid getting close to their hurt. Yet there is the ministry of presence, which at very difficult times might be the most helpful thing to do. One of the best things to do when giving pastoral support is to be present, present to listen more and talk less. Be present to empathize with the individual and allow them to suffer and express their hurt. By listening and engaging oneself fully in the vulnerable moment there is healing that takes place just by being present. In the book *The Art of Being a Healing Presence*, the following statement expresses the power of being present

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[47] Margaret E. Mohrmann, M.D., *Medicine as Ministry* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1995), 115.

[48] Kenneth C. Haugk, Ph.D., *Don't Sing Songs To A Heavy Heart* (St. Louis, MO: Stephen Ministries, 2004), 16.

in times of greatest need: "You realize that holiness is at work as you consciously and compassionately accompany others. Then sometimes when you least expect it, a sense of awe overwhelms you –awe, perhaps strong assurance, or waves of gratitude, or an immense sense of peace. You cannot make any of this happen. You can only welcome is as it unfolds, revealing itself and making its presence known. It is sacred work."[49] It is a great privilege for pastoral care to enter such healing moments in listening and empathizing with the suffering individual. It is a great gift to be able to practice such a powerful ministry. "Healing presence draws upon a similar sense of hospitality. You consciously create space for another that feels welcoming, quieting and secure."[50]

When true pastoral care is practiced, one is actually participating in God's true love for people. Jesus came into the world to share the love of God. Pastoral care is to continue the work Jesus did, that of sharing God's amazing and divine love. "Pastoral care is the type of caring which we've defined as an expression of the life of the Christian community, or of a person or persons who are representative of the community, when it is acting our God's purpose in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus in and for the world. Pastoral caring is one clear expression of agape love, and attitude toward others on our part which is representative of the 'being-for-others' of God as God is known in Jesus Christ."[51]

Justes takes it a step further by highlighting the fact that caregivers are not only sharing God's love, but they give opportunities to people to share the hurt, pain, and shame they may be experiencing. "Ministry is not entirely in what we do, but more

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[49] James E. Miller and Susan C. Cutshall, *The Art of Being a Healing Presence* (Fort Wayne, IN: Willowgreen Publishing, 2012), 69.

[50] Miller and Cutshall, 87.

[51] David K. Switzer, *Pastoral Care Emergencies* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2000), 15.

important, it lies in the character of who we are-our being-as well as in our doing. Our own awareness and embodiment of God's boundless love deeply affect our way of being. As we embody God's love and grace, we open doors for people to confess shameful secrets."[52]

People often bottle up and keep shameful experiences a secret for most of their lives and share with a chaplain or clergy these painful experiences as they are facing the end of life. People feel the need to share something that bothered them for many years and feel the need to share it, so they feel comfortable to open up to a stranger, like a chaplain or clergy. The role of pastoral care is to keep these secrets shared very confidential and allow the individual to feel safe and secure in these sharing moments. In order for us to hear confession we must have self–awareness and be aware of our reactions inside and out.[53]

In pastoral care is present the theology of Jesus's model and having the call of God to do the service that God calls us to do. "If a theology of Christian pastoral care is to have any real validity, it must find its roots in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Peter (1 Peter 2:1) tells us that Jesus, by his own suffering, set the example as to how to cope with the suffering of persecution. Paul and the writer to the Hebrews, along with others, develop theology that set us the pattern for service."[54] One's life, it is helpful to look back at every major situation, and see what can be learned from those experiences in order to continue to grow. As one learns from Christ and from personal experiences, one

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[52] Emma J. Justes, *Please Don't Tell: What to Do with the Secrets People Share* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2014), 29.

[53] Justes, *Please*, 162.

[54] Kirkwood, 117, 118.

finds "new discoveries about God provide the confidence, excitement and resources to be wise, caring, firm and yet gentle, as Christ was, in dealing with patients."[55]

Conclusion

In every life led opportunity, caregivers ought to grow in Christ like character and develop traits that make them better equipped in pastoral care. Personally, it is hard for me to be "firm yet gentle" in the servanthood setting. Yet by looking at the life of Jesus and how He truly loved and accepted people, His ministry was filled with genuine compassion and it gives me personally an example of how to practice pastoral care. In order for the individual to grow in the ministry of pastoral care, I believe that it is necessary to spend time studying God's Word, especially the gospels, the life of Jesus. Not to study God's Word as I am studying for a test but in order to truly commune with the Lord and experience personal renewal. And as I walk away from my time with the Lord, the people I visit with may experience God's presence through me. "This theology provides a more a positive approach to pastoral care. It enables the pastoral visitor to have confidence in: A *Relevant God*, who is flexible in responding to the needs of his people; A *Compassionate God*, who cares for the whole person-body, mind and spirit; A *Compelling God*, to whom the pastoral visitor and his people may turn with confidence, for guidance, wisdom and strength; A *Suffering God,* who shares humanity's sufferings; A *Patient* God, who bears with our imperfections and stumblings as we try to serve him;

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[55] Kirkwood, 118.

An *Encouraging God*, who picks us up, comforts us and sends us back into the fray with greater enthusiasm."[56]

As ministers of the gospel, caregivers ought to follow Jesus' footsteps in providing the same ministry of love and compassion to the church and to the un-churched, cross-culturally, reaching beyond the walls of the church. God is everywhere and desires them to be His healing hands and feet to those that are overburdened, suffering, and hurting. As caregivers they should give all energy to represent God's love to one another. But before one becomes the healing hands and feet of Jesus, that person must first sit at His feet. And therefore, pastoral care begins with God and ends with God. Begins with God as the center of one's life, and ends with God as the ultimate focus and hope for the sufferer.

[56] Kirkwood, 133.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

In this paper I look at ministry of the caretakers that takes place in the church setting, where there is a proper supporting system facilitated by the church. I will start first by looking at my role as a chaplain in the hospital and how that relates with another ministry for the caretakers that will help show the benefits of such ministry. As a chaplain, my ministry is not only about praying with people in need but also there is the big factor in supporting all staff, especially the nurses that are caretakers for the sick and hurting. The nurses are individuals that give their all with great energy for those in need. They serve in order to bring healing and care for those that are sick so that patients may leave the hospitals healed or at least in better condition. My support for the nurses is unique and personal because I see how they struggle with the load of caring for the patients and emotionally look overwhelmed at times. The support for the caretakers is done on a daily basis because they need to know that someone is there that they could debrief with, pray for, and support through their hard moments of crisis.

In a similar way I will be looking at another ministry setting where the similar methods could be implemented. I will be looking at children ministries and the role of the pastor in supporting the parents as parents raise their children for Jesus. I will be looking at the role of the parents in discipling their own children and how the pastor can support

and encourage them. As the parents get tired and exhausted in raising and caring for their children in the home environment, the pastor or pastoral team has a role to play in supporting them, the parents. I will be looking at how the church can collaborate with the parents in ways where they can feel supported and loved by creating programs.

I will also look how the pastor can be there intentionally for the parents as caretakers to better facilitate the ministry of children. I believe that the parents first priority should be their home responsibility, nurturing their precious children towards God's kingdom. I will look at some ideas on how that may be done in a way where a pastor or pastoral team, is there for them along the way so the parents don't feel burned out in their role. I will see how that will impact lives and children will be spiritually enriched and happy families will thrive in our community. It will start from the pastor in the church in creating a healthy environment and being willing to come along side parent and be a coach in leading their children to learn to live for Jesus.

Components of a Strong Youth and Children's Ministry

In building a healthy ministry for youth, Doug Fields lists nine components for a strong youth ministry. Some of these components that Fields mentions for youth ministry are very useful for children's ministry as well. The nine components are "the power of God, purpose, potential audience, programs, process, planned values, parents, participating leaders, and perseverance."[1] The first component is for the youth pastor or children's pastor to experience the power of God in their own life. "A healthy youth ministry begins when we take seriously the power of God for our own spiritual lives. A

[1] Doug Fields, *Purpose Driven Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 17.

direct connection exists between a leader's spiritual vitality and a healthy youth ministry."[2] This is also true for children's ministry, one who works in children's ministry ought to have a close walk with the Lord. The individual needs to know and have a relationship with God so they love serving and caring for children and parents in the church. After Fields lays the foundation of the youth pastor having a living connection with Christ, he builds on his foundation with the rest of the components.

The second component of a healthy youth ministry is to clarify the purpose of the ministry and develop the ability to communicate the vision and direction of your ministry. The third component of ministry is the consider the potential audience, "identifying which students are the target for the purpose."[3] The following component to a successful youth ministry according to Fields is programs. When it comes to children's ministry programming is very important. The workers need to make sure that they can reach every child/student at their level that fits them well, and a strong, clear, well organized programming helps tremendously. Component number five deals with the process, this is where children are helped to move to their own spiritual maturity. Have a purpose for the program that will be within the framework of their spiritual growth and help them along the way to grow spiritually and flourish. Planned values is the next component; "all people have values, attitudes, styles, and beliefs that influence their lives."[4] Up to this point in his book Fields wrote about programming and how to program effectively, but beginning with values, the emphasis has shifted to people.

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[2] Fields, *Purpose,* 19.

[3] Fields, *Purpose,* 19.

[4] Fields, *Purpose,* 20.

The seventh component deals with the importance of working well with the parents. Cannot have a strong children's ministry unless there is teamwork or collaboration with each family in the church. Churches need to validate the importance of this awesome collaboration so there can be a successful ministry. When parents are valued, cared for, respected, cherished, involved, and supported, it gives such amazing opportunities to have great potential in growing healthy ministries in the church. There's the need to create "family-friendly" relationships so there can be successful ministries within the church of God.[5]

The eighth component talks about participating leaders, building a team of great volunteers that have a passion to serve and love children. Last and not least, the ninth component, is perseverance. Perseverance according to the book Purpose Driven Youth, which gives us the ability in "learning how to survive the overwhelming responsibilities, discipline problems, and the adventure of change."[6] Looking at Fields book on the components of a healthy youth ministry, one of the major components, the seventh component, deals with supporting the parents as they raise their children. Part of children's ministry in the church is to caretaking of parents who work so hard in raising their children.

Support for Parents

The ministry of caretakers in any organization can be tough and the turnover is overwhelming, however, if one knows how to care for those on the front line it will help them succeed and avoid burnout. In this case, the pastor and parent support ministry

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[5] Fields, *Purpose,* 21.

[6] Fields, *Purpose,* 22.

needs to be developed under these nine recommended components so we can build a healthy environment for the church and help the parents from burnout. If parents receive support, it may increase the parent's involvement in the church, in their children's lives, understanding their role at home better and helping them lead their own children towards deeper fulfilled spiritual lives. It may take years to establish an intentional pastor-parent ministry support, however with God's leading and full dedication from the pastor or pastoral team, one can establish these strong foundations. Pastor-parent ministry should be a friendly collaboration support. Doug states in his book that such a ministry creates a "win-win-win" potential for everyone.[7]

God blessed me with wonderful children and he expects me to make that a priority in raising them. He gives me that teaching in Deuteronomy 6:5-7 which says; "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (NIV). Parent's role is very vital because they are the primary caregivers for their own children and they should start at home in teaching, guiding, and caring for their children. And the church support should come next, where the pastor-parent relationship is built from the beginning of the child's growth. In order for the pastor-parent support to take place there are a few ideas that need considering. As Fields shares in his book *Purpose Drive Youth Ministry*, one of the main way to support parents is for the pastor to meet with the parents and get better acquainted. Meeting with the parents would also lead to parents sharing their concerns, success stories, constructive input so the pastor can better minister to their children and also

[7] Fields, *Purpose,* 253.

celebrate the successes with the parents. Also, Fields suggests that it is beneficial to invite parents to be part of a prayer ministry, parent night out, family fun, educational resources and other opportunities of help and service. I agree that this will create a friendly pastor-parent ministry and will be very beneficial in the long run. I also like how Fields highlights the importance of designing family programs in which parents could be part of and supportive of. He continues to say that a pastor should show concern, offer teamwork, and offer support in any given opportunity.[8]

A pastor-parent support ministry is so vital to a successful children's and youth ministry and it should be done toward one goal in mind and that goal is to offer a spiritual life plan for the children by helping parents be their coaches for life. Fields mentions in his book that coaching teenagers in evangelism, worship, fellowship, discipleship, and ministry is done as pastor-parent meet to be on the same page to work on these areas. This is to be done in the same way working with parents of younger children, to build their spiritual life plan. Fields expresses the importance of ongoing communication between the pastor and parent, to discuss the spiritual life plans of their children, that the pastor may aid in the spiritual growth of the children and youth.[9]

The challenge is that parents either leave all the spiritual mentoring for the church to do, or try to do all the work themselves. Regarding the later extreme of trying to push their children to grow spiritually, Kendra Creasy Dean makes a powerful statement. She speaks of how parents miss understand Deuteronomy 6:5-7. She states that this text does not say that "parents are not called to make their children godly; teenagers are created in God's image, no matter what we do to them, and no matter what they do to disguise it.

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[8] Fields, *Purpose,* 264.

[9] Fields, *Purpose,* 256-260.

The law called upon Jewish parents to show their children godliness—to teach them, talk to them, embody for them their own delight in the Lord, 24/7. Everything they need for their children's faith formation, God had already given them. In the end, awakening faith does not depend on how hard we press young people to love God, but on how much we show them that we do."[10] From this paragraph it is clear that parents should not push their religion or faith on their children, yet must be role models and examples in everything they do. They need to walk the talk and not just talk the walk. In other words, actions speak much louder than words.

One's Christian walk should be lived out in daily life and faith should be translated into a strong foundation built on God. Once children see a genuine faith in parents, they will step up and imitate them without them realizing that they are their parents imitators. I could testify this fact with my own children, for example, as we go shopping or in general as we are interacting with people, I could just sense how they are watching me closely and making sure that I say "thank you" and politely greet each person. Children are such amazing gifts from God that we have the privilege to nurture, love, lead, and teach them the "stories of God's faithfulness"[11] in their daily lives so they can always remember those moments as precious moments. Growing up, my father encouraged me to read the Bible at a young age and how I cherish those memories. He taught me poems and helped me memorize Bible verse, for me those were the only happy times that I remember as far as our home life was. At times we would have family

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[10] Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 119, 120.

[11] Dean, 113.

worship, but those were too long to sit through and I was too young to be engaged in all the adult language.

I also remember how the youth pastor from one of the city churches came and spent time with us. Those conversations for us as young people were meaningful and encouraging, and the lessons lasted with us for months. We respected him fully and we could tell that he wanted to partner with us and our parents, so he could provide for our emotional and spiritual needs. We could sense that there was that loving soul that desired to be the hands and feet for Jesus in helping us as poor families.

Acts born out of love are very important, one can talk faith with one's children but if one does not love one another like Christ loved us then one can lose children because they see past words. As Dean stated, we need to "learn to translate beliefs into love."[12] The community of love needs to be developed through consistent demonstration, that children can see and learn from adults' example what true love is. Parents need to live by faith and take time to love genuinely care and love one another.

Dean also mentions that "Luther was convinced that Christian formation began with youth ministry, and he was convinced that youth ministry started at home."[13] Luther would instruct fathers to be the head of the household and to be involved in the lives of his children, to talk with them especially during dinner time. "Luther would not have been surprised by the National Study of Youth and Religion's conclusion that the best way for youth to become more serious about religious faith is for parents to become more

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[12] Dean, 121.

[13] Dean, 111.

serious about theirs… parents matter most in shaping the religious lives of their children."[14]

There is a very pertinent question that people are asking; "Why do our youth leave our churches?" Well, first of all I believe people should ask ourselves why we are not involved in any of our church departments that deal with Sunday schools or Sabbath schools? Why are they so busy or pretend to be busy so they don't have to step outside our comfort zone? And why is it that some churches are not so receptive of children? Well, some folks say that they are too tired and they also say that they have such busy schedules that they cannot volunteer in any children's areas in the church. I found that the excuse is merely not that, but the fact that they are truly afraid of being around the youth because they themselves are not well grounded within their faith. So to avoid those embarrassing moments in front of the youth, they avoid and show little care for children and youth in the churches. This is so typical and it is so sad to even think that adults really show so little care for all of the children's salvation. They must immerse themselves in the Word of God, live the Word, and love the Word. They are not to worry about whether they are skillful enough theologically but just sincerely offer love and be genuinely caring. Kids will respond with love and openness if adults are real, authentic, and genuine. Adults must put extra efforts in learning their names, playing games with them, and being there when they need to talk with someone. Being a presence leads children and youth to realize that there is consistency and they will come to the youth pastor as they see that security and consistency.

Hopkins in the book *We can keep them in the church* states that churches need not only to have the right message in church but the right love in the church and itself will

[14] Dean, 111.

change the world.[15] Some of the suggestions given to keep our youth in the church include praying for our parents, for our children, and the youth of our churches. We need to show love and support in tangible ways so they would want to come and worship in our churches.[16] People love to be around loving and friendly people. Training our members to be kind and friendly is vital for our churches otherwise parents will never return. The children and parents that walk through the doors of the church are so precious, and pastors need to value families, celebrate with them their joys, and involve them in the worship services. Offer opportunities of growth through small groups, opportunities of service through outreach ministries, listen well to children and parents by inviting them for lunches, and social gatherings to get to know them better. Also, accept parents and children the way they look or behave is very important, work on developing relationships with parents and children that they would feel important. This step should take place before they even would participate in any activities in the church. All in all, leaders need to embrace them just like Jesus embraced all who came to Him and said to His disciples in Math 19:14 "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (NIV).

This type of genuine love and care will attract parents to come to church on a regular basis, when they see that their children are loved and cared for in many ways. The parents then will have the desire to be involved and participate in church activities and the church will come alive, or as a recent book's title states, the church will grow

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[15] Myrna Tetz and Gary L. Hopkins, eds., *We Can Keep Them in the Church* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2004), 20.

[16] Tetz and Hopkins, eds., 31, 32.

young.[17] Developing a "child-centered ministry" is what we should be all about according to Parchment. Parchment goes on to say that "heaven is 100 percent child-centered."[18] This statement is so powerful and so true. God loves each child and has such tender care for them. Why would one be so careless in leading children and youth and not make every effort in nurturing them towards the kingdom of God? Does one know that God thinks so highly of them?

I find it very important for parents to be encouraged by the pastor of the church and they themselves need to make the church a priority in their lives. In some situations I met parents where the priority was simply placed on the secular things, such as sports, clubs or other social events and church was not being prioritized. The commitment often is not seen in parents in bringing and encouraging their children to attend and be involved in the activities that are just happening at church. Some parents fail to see the need of positive encouragement, showing their children what's the priority in life, which it should always be seeking God's ways in all we do.

I like how Josh Billings rephrased Proverbs 22:6 as follows; "Train up a child is the way he should go---and walk there yourself once in a while."[19] What Billings meant is that "if you want your child to love church, then you need to be in the habit of walking the walk—going to church on regular basis, for example. Billings was saying that you cannot train up children without you, as a parent, being involved. You must convince

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[17] Kara Powell, Jake Mulder, and Brad Griffin, *Growing Young* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerBooks, 2016).

[18] Tetz and Hopkins, eds., 55, 56.

[19] Tetz and Hopkins, eds., 121.

your children that you also enjoy walking in the way they should go, and you do this through your daily behavior."[20]

It is essential for parents to have a positive outlook towards the church and the programs of the church. Also, each parents needs to show that they care about the church and that the church is a priority. So it all starts from home! This is where parent's role is such vital point in the children's lives. The next step, is the pastor reaching out to the parent and assisting them in their role as a parent and providing that intentional support so both parent and pastor can be on the same page in providing that spiritual need for the children and the youth.

The world is full of negative distractions, so much children could see on the internet, in video games, and other types of technological distractions. Leaders should work hard on guarding the hearts of children from so much negative and hurtful distractions. They occupy their little hearts with good and heavenly things, so they would have the desire for eternal life. That they may think of heaven as a place of happiness, hope, and eternal joy. Take the time to teach them to love the Savior by sharing stories, through family time, and in singing and praising God together.

Parents and pastors should have a goal in mind and that goal should be in how to keep children in the church. While this task may be daunting and exhausting for parents, this however is where the pastor should come in. A pastoral team member should be one who could offer that secure shoulder of encouragement and offer full support so the parents don't give up on teaching their kids to follow Jesus. The pastor should take the time to be encouraging and uplifting, sharing words of love and assurance. The Holy Spirit will lead the pastor and the parent to discern when to give hope, wisdom, and care

[20] Tetz and Hopkins, eds., 121.

in the proper time and way. God wants parents and pastors to give all they have, to show and lead young ones towards a deeper relationship with the Lord.

I believe that the church should be the community where the parents can be empowered and sustained positively. The church ought to be the place where both parents and children are mentored, for this would be a great benefit of our children's salvation. Mentoring means giving your valued time to that child, helping them, being a friend that they may freely open up to and share their struggles in life. I believe that those children that have any kind of mentorship in life will remember for life the experience of mentorship and will continue to lean on that person for advice and wisdom. This is the best thing that churches could do for the youth, train them through mentoring and admire them where they are in life, help them through obstacles and they will have an opportunity and foundation to thrive as adults.

Parental involvement has such a strong impact on the children's lives and that's why it is necessary to engage with them and walk beside them on regular basis. Also guiding children towards making good decisions in life is essential when they are young because that's where a good foundation may be laid. When children grow to be teens and then into adulthood, they will remember and rely on those foundations given at a young age. Give the kids space and create that relationship with them so they can grow and develop skills that they can use in life.

A pastor involved in the life of families will help establish those long lasting relationships for those parents that are vulnerable and seeking wisdom and support. In order to grow a bonding experience with families and create a strong support for the families, a pastor should be present by being transparent, honest, and caring. A pastor

perhaps could be involved in the families lives by attending some outside activities, such as soccer games, basketball games, band or choir performances. Such support by the church family will always be remembered and cherished for a long time. This will also show parents that the pastor is investing his time in them and cares for them truly not only doing duties and obligations in the church on weekly basis. It is to be understand that if a church has only one pastor, the senior pastor, this would be an impossibility, to go support the children in their activities and sports. The pastor would ask other church members, as mentors to help out and attend the events. But if the church has multiple pastors, then the children's pastor or youth pastor may be able to go to some of the events, or again, as another member of the church to represent them at the event.

Family Equipping

Author Timothy Paul Jones in his book *Family Ministry Field Guide* speaks of how to have an impactful ministry through the importance of family equipping. This family equipping may be accomplished by hosting activities and events that are oriented to equip parents to disciple their children.[21] Jones uses Brian Hays as one of his examples of effective family equipping, where Brian "implemented a process for a lifelong partnership between church and home that he called 'legacy milestones.'"[22] The core values from his book explains how the role of the church leaderships is based on family-equipping ministry. Through these goals of equipping families, the leaders and pastors of the church gather together and rethink of the plans of such family equipping approaches

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[21] Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011), 114.

[22] Jones, 114.

as far as where the activities take part. The leaders intentionally plan carefully in what ways they can encourage parents through different events and activities so they can equip and train parents as "primary disciple-makers" of their own children.[23]

The goal is to teach, train, and equip parents for the goal of having the children to be true disciples of Christ. This is done through many communications from the leaders through different trainings and instruction to parents, without assuming that parents already know how to guide their children spiritually. As "the church, instead of replacing what happens at home, supplements and reinforces the faith training that occurs in Christian households."[24]

Parents need to be trained well regarding the vital importance of making their children's walk with Christ a top priority in the home. Children ought to be fed spiritually both at home and at the church. "Parents receive encouragement to rethink their priorities and family schedules with this purpose in mind."[25] Jones explains that it takes much time and effort for the pastor and the church to involve the families and train the parents on how to equip and train their children for the kingdom.[26]

I agree with the statement: "Family-equipped ministry isn't primary an organizational activity. It flows out of who you are, beginning with the ministry leader."[27] This is so true! If the leader is spiritual and is a leader at home, with God centered priorities, then the ministry will move forward in the right direction and will thrive

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[23] Jones, 115.

[24] Jones, 116.

[25] Jones, 115.

[26] Jones, 116.

[27] Jones, 137.

successfully. Being transparent with God and having an openhearted ministry, following God whole heartedly, and with a full desire to seek God's will and presence, will lead to God's tremendous blessing. But it has to start with a godly leader and a godly, genuine, Christian home life.

Apostle Paul tells us clearly how a leader should be within their own household and how God's love should be shining consistently through such leader. It is a privilege and honor to be the servant of God, one must be careful and attentive in all that is done, including taking care of one's own family. Writing to Timothy, Paul advises:

> "Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap" (1 Timothy 3:2-7 NIV).

One thing that I noticed growing up in the church and I noticed this in my own ministry, is that ministers at times become so absorbed and involved in church ministry that they often forget about spending time with their own families. There should be this careful consideration on the part of the leader to provide support to the parents and live a balanced life of being there for their own family. The pastor ought to provide an example for others in mentoring and living a life of discipleship in their own home. Often ministers work for God so much that they forget to spend time with God and time with their own spouses and children. They should understand that a strong ministry starts with a strong foundation in every area of their life, including their home life.

Coming back to the parents' role at home and in the lives of their children, it requires major effort and great responsibility to do what God called us to do in raising our children for loving and serving Jesus. One great idea for parents to have faith talks once a week in the home, through which parents may lead and equip their children in the right direction. A pastor should offer tools that help the parents lead these family talks on weekly basis. "The family faith talk guide must be clear, brief, and adaptable to a variety of circumstances. The outline should be simple as a fun activity for the whole family, followed by a Scripture, a few discussion questions, and a closing prayer."[28] These tools should simply be offered through different ways, such as newsletters or parental e-mails, Sabbath school or Sunday school communications, so everyone could have access to these important tools.[29]

Leaders need to embrace parents, allow them to be involved in the Sabbath/Sunday school classes, encourage them to spend time with their kids at home, listen to them, memorize verses with them and apply Bible truth to parent's lives and theirs. It will be helpful to organize family socials, day trips, see what the needs are in the community for outreach opportunities. Offer resources for the parents, such as devotional books, parental books and resources so they can read on their own.

What are the best ways to engage the parents in their churches? Pay attention to parents and let them be heard. "Think, Gary Chapman, 'love languages.'[30] Just as a husband and wife can feel loved and appreciated through different love languages, each parent will sense our parent/church partnership differently. I have walked alongside one

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[28] Jones, 157.

[29] Jones, 157.

[30] Gary Chapman, The Five Love Languages (Chicago, IL: Northfield Publishing, 2015).

mom who enjoys coming by my office. She feels like she has a partner when I share my time with her, reinforcing my observations on her being a thoughtful and amazing mom. She also appreciates when I take the time to tell her about myself. I have found that this mom needs to be affirmed in addition to being able to trust me. These parents feel like they have a partner when I value their time and send them resources that fit their needs as they progress through each phase of their children's lives."[31]

Parents make daily decisions for their children, but parents are not to force their wills upon their children, but to guide and teach their children with gentleness and with much encouragement. George Barna states that "Parents cannot force a worldview or philosophy of life upon young individuals, but they can provide key insights and connections that will help them see life from a different vantage point or understand a dimension of life more thoroughly and accurately."[32]

Helping parents grow spiritually grounded kids to young adults, they need to allow their children to see in themselves as parents Christlikeness. Parents are to communicate with Christlikeness, give encouragement when their children feel discouraged, offering kindness to their own children in time of need, showing strong faith when struggles arise. Children learn by example and examples of Christian living by parents allow them to see and learn for themselves of what it means to follow Christ. "Kids –even teenagers—take cues from their parents. Our research typically shows that when parents are absolutely committed to their faith and live constantly according to their faith view and values, kids are much more likely to accept what has been modeled for

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[31] "What Does it Mean to Partner With Parents," Orange Leaders, accessed August, 21, 2018, http://orangeblogs.org/orangeleaders/2016/03/17/what-does-it-mean-to-partner-with-parents/.

[32] George Barna, *Real Teens* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 2001), 146.

them as reasonable, without it being jammed down their throats. The keys to successfully passing on faith from one generation to another relate to making faith central to one's existence, avoiding lifestyle hypocrisy and integrating faith behaviors and values into everything the family des as a unit and as individuals."[33] Being real and authentic with your own children will pay off in the long run. That's why parents are obligated to give all the energy they can to impress these little hearts towards Christ. And it can be exhausting at times, parents might feel inadequate, that's why pastors need to extend that extra mile of support, to reach out to these parents so they can be encouraged to continue to be able to give the proper values at home. It is so vital to have parents partner with the pastor and have that intentional one-on-one relationship where they can trust one another in the raising of children.

The encouraging news for those in ministry is that this is a generation where some parents have deeper desire to be involved and to seek help in how to raise their children. "I have never seen parents more hungry for help then they are now. They want to spend more time with their children. They feel acutely the need so be better equipped as parents. As a result, the climate is ripe for parents to become increasingly involved in programs that can equip then in the spiritual formation of their children. Why the parents feel so desperate? They feel helpless, not only with their children but with their lives as a whole."[34] This book was written in 1994, but I believe that this is more true today in 2018. And where there is a great window of opportunity for the pastor to find teachable moments for parents, they are not ignore these opportunities, but take advantage of them. "It is unrealistic also to expect that all parents will equipped and prepared, in and of

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[33] Barna, *Real,* 148.

[34] Mark DeVries, *Family-Based Youth Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1994), 97.

themselves, to lead their children towards Christian maturity. Youth workers need to find ways to equip parents without basing the success or failure of the youth ministry on those parents' faithfulness. During this season of tremendous motivation for parents to learn how to be more effective father and mothers, churches can seize the opportunity to help parents develop a Christian framework for their own lives."[35]

It will be beneficial for pastors to step up a level and be able to be more active in offering different seminars for the parents such as marriage classes, parent classes, Bible study for teens or other faith-based question for parents on how to talk with their children about different subjects. Parents need to know that you are not there to overtake their youth in any way but you are there to partner with them and help them towards the same goal. "When you look at youth ministry and parenting concerns, the common denominator is busyness. Yet, I often believe I'm the only one with a packed life, so then I'm left with wondering why I don't always agree with parents. To develop a family-friendly attitude embrace the fact that busyness is epidemic and universal in our culture. It's not limited to those doing youth ministry. Universally, families need time…together. When you understand (as a pastor) this need, you'll be most sensitive in your programming, your teaching, and your expectations of students and parents."[36] As the pastor or pastoral team support and sustains families, it is beneficial for him to consider these facts that we live in this generation with such busyness and it must be considered not to overwhelm the parents with many programs and events. Pastors are to get with the parents and walk beside them hearing and listening to their immediate needs. This way

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[35] DeVries, 98.

[36] Doug Fields, *Your First Two Years in Youth Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 107.

parents will be able to feel listened, valued, and respected and not overwhelmed as they try to raise their precious children for Christ.

Conclusion

This chapter looked at many important factors of how a pastor can partner with the parents so he can provide intentional support so the parents have a guide map in how they can raise their children and keep them in the church. It is important to get the parents involved in family-based ministry of our churches and the pastor to be there for them and providing the support needed as the chaplain would provide in the hospital for the caregivers in this case the nurses. As the nurses give all their energy and care to the patients in the same way the parents offer much of their energy to raising their children. The nurses get exhausted and burnout when they work hard and receive little support. In the same way parents also get burnt out and want to give up when it comes to spiritual discipleship. Often they expect the church to do the work and they don't give any spiritual guidance. This is why I say that a pastor should be the spiritual mentor and intentional support to the parents. I find in my field that nurses at times feel like giving up due to their stressful workload and lack support and often look for a career change or to work at a less stressful, more supporting place.

That's why it is beneficial for a spiritual mentor or coach to be there for them, guiding them, and listening to their struggles. Someone to pray for them, encourage them, and uplift them through acts of support. Letting the nurses know that they are the chosen ones who can bring that healing touch in the midst of suffering and bring hope to the hopeless. In the same way I like to parallel the parents as far as having a support system,

an encouraging voice, and a mentor to lead these precious parents through these rough times they face in this society.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

The context of the project is the Southview Medical Center, of Centerville, Ohio. The hospital is in need of providing pastoral care for nurses who share their gifts and talents in caring for the patients at the hospital. Therefore the purpose of this project is to create and implement a plan of coaching and ministry of presence through intentional care giving for the nurses.

For this project I have been focusing on the nurses, who are the caretakers for the patients and the families in the hospital. I sense that there is a great need to support the nurses for they carry heavy burdens, and have such a full workload that comes with such great stress intensity. Therefore, it is my passion to explore ways in how to support and care for the nurses better, seeing where the need is greater and to help, guide, and coach them throughout the day with great support, which will make them more effective in the work place.

There is the need for special attention to nurses, as the shortage of the nurses is acute, partly because of nurses being overworked and are stressed in their work place with the workload they carry. Nurses go through a lot of challenges on day-to-day basis, they serve and care for the sick, at times see those they care for pass away instead of being healed. Truly in their care for the sick, nurses do make a difference and impact

many lives. They not only provide care for the sick but at times they also get sick and go through the agony of having to fight off diseases they might pick up in the same hospital they serve in. They serve many individuals with different emotional needs and they are there for everyone under their care. The hearts of many of the nurses are full of compassion, because they signed up to be nurses to be involved in the ministry of care for others. Nurses always work in a fast pace, they work in a demanding environment, and therefore they need to be cared for more intentionally because they carry such a high stress level workload. Another challenge for nurses is the continual struggle with transitioning of new staff or shortage of staff and they have to learn how to cope through these personnel changes.

Because of all these challenges that nurses face, the purpose of this project was to focus on the nurses and provide intentional ministry of presence, offer coaching through one-on-one discussions, assisting them with support, as well as care for them in a way where their stress level may be reduced. The goal was to listen and care so that as they share their burdens with the chaplain, the nurses may find their load lighter and easier to carry. It is helpful to be available for them and let them know that there is a safe and confidential place that is welcoming for sharing and discussions. The ministry of presence and self-care packages was provided weekly and included the following some of the following items:

- Food/snacks
- cart with goodies
- Interactive ruffle guessing games (basket winner)
- tickets to the movies or concerts

- encouraging words of hope
- stress reducing conversations
- massage therapy on the go
- huddle for prayer on Thursdays called "one min with Mariya"

All these types of support was provided for them on a regular basis so they could take time for themselves to relax and have moments of relief, as well as provide gifts cards so that they may have time for their families. The purpose of all this was to help them be supported by the chaplain that they may in turn experience greater peace and return to work the next day rejuvenated. As caretakers are cared for in these described ways, it will increase the resilience of stressors and will enhance the quality of care for the patients.

Overview of the project

This project involved twelve nurses that work at the medical surgical unit, which is a very busy unit, a stressful environment. This is one of the units in which there is a great turnover of nurses, needing often to hire new nurses to fill the vacant positions. I was told that one of the reasons that they leave is because the load is heavy to carry or they find different opportunities, like a unit with less stress. It is well known that the nurses carry a lot of stress during the shift and that's why many leave or tend to be very stressed as they do their work. That's why this project would be helpful to give them that opportunity of support and care from the hospital chaplain. The support was not only spiritual, but emotional as well.

This project is one of a kind, because there has never been such a united effort to give support and care for the nurses. In this project, the goal was to involve the president of the hospital. The plan was to update him throughout the project with the support given to the nurses, and to receive from him input, feedback, suggestions, and financial support in the caring for the nurses. As the teams of administrators, spiritual care, and nurses have been brought together in caring for the nurses, there was a united effort in carrying out the project of caring for the nurses. Part of the financial support from the president included a cart that has drawers for items to hold self-care packages for the nurses with such items as; stress balls, soothing lotions, notepads with pens with encouraging words, Bible verses on small magnet cards, warm neck massager for them as they chart at the computers.

The goals in this project was to offer coaching as I did my rounds on the unit and provide the ministry of presence and support for every nurse throughout the day. In this coaching I plan to facilitate questions such as what's going on at home? The reason that question is vitally important is because many have struggles at home that I wanted them to feel comfortable to share and be able to approach the chaplain freely to discuss and process these things. The more they feel comfortable in sharing, the better they feel inside to have someone to listen and process the deeper issues that they are struggling with. Also, as they share and possibly resolve those issues at home, work will be lighter for them, not having to think of the personal struggles but focusing on the duties at hand. The goal was to help the nurses grow spiritually and emotionally so they could be better equipped in what they do and become stronger nurses. This would help to give them the strength they need for the day and a glimpse of hope for the future. The goal was to

develop a safe place for them to process that would hopefully lead to a healthier home life. And if they have more peace and unity at home, then this would give the opportunity to translate into the work place with hopefully more peace and unity with peers. This project was centered on relationship development between the staff and the chaplain so they could feel comfortable in approaching the chaplain with personal struggles and willing to open up and ask difficult questions. This would affirm that we are on the same page as a medical team and we are here to serve together.

Some other questions I asked the nurses to create an atmosphere of caring and listening included:

"How are you coping with the stress level at work?"

"How is your load for the day?"

"How can I support you?"

"How's the family at home?"

"What are you doing at home that is fun?"

"How do you cope with stress when off work?"

"What's your hobby?"

"What are ways you relax when at home?"

"When at home how do you process what happened at work?"

Part of coaching, is trying to get nurses to engage in sharing and helping them come to their own conclusions of self-awareness. This would enhance the need for them to think about life and the importance of self-care, the importance of family, and the importance of peace and unity at home and at work. I also planned to facilitate tips and a few steps of how to cope with stress levels at work or at home, and how to process what's

going on at work by taking care of themselves. The purpose of these tips was to encourage nurses to care for themselves at work by taking breaks, lunches, how to process stress by breathing slowly when there is a crisis and how not to take it home with them. And as they go home at the end of their shift they can think of the importance of self-care, and how they can leave things at the door and lift their emotional status to a better mood. I planned to suggest ideas on self-care such as exercise, eating healthier, spending time journaling, quiet walks in nature, laughter, making friends, positive thoughts, music, taking a bath and finding a hobby they like.

With these tips and the coaching questions, as well as the stress relief items in the care packages, the nurses should experience the ministry of presence, offering love, and support, and they should feel supported, knowing that the hospital they work for cares for them. As they feel supported, cared and embraced by the organization they would want to stay and work in the unit and not look for a different hospital or unit to transfer to. I believe if care is offered to the nurses, especially from the pastoral care department, there will be an impactful difference with results that can be repeated in other units and facilities. There were some funds requested for the department in order to do the extra things in this project. I am thankful for the hospital administrators who are interested in staff support and were willing to invest in staff care. I am also thankful for the privilege of working at a faith-based organization that provides this freedom to be able to offer such extended support for our staff and encouraging them through such unique ways.

There is also a spiritual component to the project where I planned to offer intentional ministry of presence by blessing the unit, blessing of hands, which is done by having everyone there and holding a short spiritual service for the staff. I offered

encouraging words and prayed for their unit and called it "blessing celebration" with cake, prayer and hugs at the end letting them know how much we appreciate and support them. This is a time where everyone can be reached at their comfort level in a circle holding hands and praying for a particular room or unit. I believe that much good and great blessings come from praying with the nurses in the rooms and units they work in. I also facilitated blessing of hands, where we gather them together and offer an encouraging word about how special their hands are, these hands give meaning to all that we do, each hand has a story to tell at home and at work. Their hands do many wondrous things and how God blesses them through those special hands. Then I pray over each individual nurse by name, with a short personal prayer and blessing of their hands for the ministry of healing. I believe that such short services are powerful and impactful spiritually. I also planned to offer communion to those who would like to participate. As well as a special prayer in the nursing station called "One minute with Mariya" every other Thursday for the unit, which is coming together in a circle with all the nurses at their nursing station in the middle of the unit, asking for prayer requests, praying for them and offering a blessing for them that day. Part of the plan was to bring the nurses a snack that Thursday, so after the prayer and throughout the day they could enjoy a snack remembering that they had a special prayer. I also purchased a cart that I would call the "tea cart." This cart would be for the nurses with a tea and coffee machine and snacks, cookies, and some fruit and an encouraging word. Also, I plan to place a small box on the unit for prayer requests and follow up on these requests.

Every day there would be something that I would focus on the nurses, I would take special efforts to create deep relationship with them in either talking to them

personally, bringing them the tea cart, and getting acquainted with each one of them. I plan on going to the unit with the cart, which will have items mentioned earlier that would bring smiles to their faces. And as they pick up some lotion, a stress ball, a neck warmer, or whatever item is on the cart, I could have conversations one-on-one with each one of them. So engaging with nurses on a daily basis would help them get to know me, giving opportunities to open up and share as well as send referrals for the patients that may need to see a chaplain.

All these stated in the planning project would take place in a six week period and then assess the difference in the end through feedback from the twelve nurses, their manager, supervisors, and those that took were part in the project. Their would be interviews throughout the project and in the end there would be another post verbal survey asking for their feedback on what was done and the benefits they saw through this intentional relationship building. The key is to be fully engaged with each one and feel that we are part of a caring, supportive team. Praying that even after the project is over we may continue to be a visible support to the units, continuing with some of these new ideas. There would be examples of how chaplains could minister effectively to nurses. How nurses feel supported by the hospital pastoral team that patient and family care would be stronger and that nurses may not burn out and look to work at other places. This is exciting that there is such a way where we can support the nurses, love on them, pray with them, and allow them to be open and provide a safe place for their emotional needs. They are dedicated workers and they put a lot of energy to do what they do, that's why the intentional stress relief and care for them is so essential and needed.

Who is Involved

The medical surgical unit is a great unit that has a wonderful supportive manager, which is very involved and engaged with all of the nurses on regular basis. I connected with her on a weekly basis and involved her in this project to see what suggestions she may have. She is the one that brings the nurses together every day and has a great work ethic. The unit also has great and hard-working nurses where at times they forget to eat lunch or take breaks. Another supervisor, who is an assistant to the manager, took part in this project by providing insights how things happen their unit with their nurses. I included surveys for the nurses in the beginning of the six-week project and at the end of the project to test the data and see how the project impacted some of the nurses on the unit from participating in this project.

The contributions of context and professional associates provided support in this project process by being involved in reading and taking part in giving feedback towards this project. The feedback was helpful in giving opportunity to make necessary changes or clarification in explaining the project. Some preliminary examples of questions I asked nurses in the surveys is in appendix A.

The research method would be us looking at the methods used as planned on a regular basis and evaluate from the two surveys, one verbal and one written and the Press Gainey scores that our patients return with feedback. Also there were interviews with the nurses, managers and supervisors, to gain feedback and assess results. It definitely was a great effort to do such a research due to everyone's busy schedule. However, I believe if the desire, passion, and effort is put forward and with all the evaluations, interviews, and examinations there should be some conclusion at the end of the project to be able to

measure the impact that took place on each nurse's life and through what area of support they really felt cared for. By either through food, tea cart, of the cart with goodies, which include self-care packages, business magnet card with uplifting encouraging words, stress ball, pocket notebooks that have an inspirational words, chap sick, lotions, message neck warmer, candy, snacks and intentional one-on-one with the chaplain. My hope was that through some of these caring elements and the spiritual and emotional services provided, there would be a great result of support for the nurses and that stories would come out of the project that would demonstrate how important it is to care for nurses who care for the hospital patients and their families. And that from this project other chaplains will take some ideas and see if they can be implemented in their own facilities.

My Project in Action

A plan was put in action for the six-week term to implement the ideas mentioned earlier in the chapter for this particular unit. On April 19 and 20, 2018, I met with each individual to introduce project and get permission, and request funds for this project. At the same time, I visited with the unit manager and unit coordinator. The following day I met with the Southview Hospital Vice President, and ran the project idea by him, and he agreed with me that our staff is in need of self-care and showing that we love and care for them. Then, I met with the Vice President of the nursing department, the volunteer coordinator, and the executive assistant for the hospital president. The project was presented to each one of them and funds were approved to our executive assistant so I could purchase all the items for this project. I was able to team up with the manager of the unit, her coordinator, and one of my spiritual care assistant volunteers, to put a plan

together and move forward the following week. My spiritual care volunteer served as the project manager for the six-week project.

On April 23, we provided surveys to the nurses and had them fill out the questions listed in the survey. We had seventeen nurses take part in the initial survey and returned the surveys to my office. Sixteen of the seventeen nurses filled out the survey and returned it to me. Appendix B has the results of the survey from the nurses. I have learned from this survey that nurses do feel at times overwhelmed and stressed. Of the sixteen nurses, ten said a resounding yes to being overwhelmed and stressed. Also the nurses are interested in having someone from the spiritual care department to come and support them in their work. Thirteen of the sixteen nurses circled "yes," on the survey for support from the spiritual care department. When asked how we could give support, many requested prayer and food. Nurses do appreciate prayer and would like to have something tangible as a way of encouragement and support. But I also noted from the survey that nurses are very busy, therefore intentional one-on-one with the chaplain is hard because of the hectic schedule. The support and encouragement has to be given in a way that does not slow the nurses down or keep them too much from their busy work. It was very helpful to read the suggestions and recommendations on the surveys and see what we could do better and how we could implement ideas to help the nurses on the unit.

As project manager, my spiritual service volunteer agreed and offered to assist me in providing snacks for the nurses on the unit twice a week. Each week, she had her daughter make different type of cookies for the nurses and we delivered them with an encouraging note. We prepared food for the nurses, brought them different types of

snacks and ordered pizza for these amazing nurses. Here is how we provided food for the nurses:

- April 24, we provided homemade cookies made by our spiritual care volunteer in our department.
- April 26, we brought the nurses a fruit tray and food in the break-room.
- April 27, the cart with goodies was provided for the nurses.
- May 1, we brought cookies for the nurses.
- May 4, we brought the cart with goodies to the nurses.
- May 8, we brought the nurses a fruit tray, heart shaped cookies, and also shared a devotional on the love of God.
- May 10, I brought the nurses a give-a-way basked with a dinner for two and a movie.
- May 14, I purchased a cake and fruits from the bakery and delivered them to the nurses.
- May 15, I again came around with the cart and gave goodies to the nurses.
- May 17, I brought cookies and stayed in the break-room to spend time getting better acquainted with each nurse.
- May 22, brought cookies and visited intentionally with each nurse.
- May 25, I brought pizza for the nurses.
- May 28, I brought a fruit tray, cookies, and the tea car with goodies and candy.

The nurses loved the support shown through food and goodies, they felt cared for and really appreciated. The whole goal was to provide intentional pastoral care to each nurse as I was bringing these goodies and providing food. I was able to start building a

trust relationship with most of the nurses. As they passed by in the halls, they thanked me for the delicious snacks and food, and our conversations started from how good the food was to other personal conversations.

I made sure to communicate with the manager on a regular basis that we will provide these things to her unit for this project and to give us some more ideas and feedback. On April 24, we again provided the cart as I described above with all the goodies in it for the nurses to take and enjoy. I valued this time and spent a few moments with each nurse in the break room or in the halls, intentionally using this opportunity to have short conversations with them. Then I brought a "prayer box" for them and placed it in the break room to put their prayer requests there so we can pray for each prayer request individually. That went very well, we received good follow-ups and great notes from the nurses asking for requests that they could not ask in person.

On April 26 I set up a prayer time at the nurses station and continued this practice every other Thursday. The secretary would call all the nurses over the intercom to come join for a time of prayer. We called this gathering of prayer "one minute with Mariya." We would have between five to ten nurses join us for prayer, depending on how busy the nurses were and who chose to make it. During this time of prayer, we had nurses asking prayer requests for patients and for the families of the patients. I would end the time of prayer by praying for each of the nurses, asking God to bless them as they cared for their patients. We had nurses open up and ask prayer requests for their spouses and their relatives. After a few weeks we would often receive great news about these prayer requests and it would help the nurses realize that God does care and hear or prayers.

One time while I was visiting a patient, the nurse that took care of that particular patient, came into the room and quickly shared with me how God has answered the prayer for her husband. We had taken the time to pray for her husband and she had a smile on her face as she shared that he was doing so much better. That made my day as she shared that wonderful news with me. Then I told the patient that we had prayed for the nurse's husband and he feels better, and we pray at the nursing station and if she would like us to pray for her we can do that too. The patient's facial reaction of joy was amazing; one could see that she appreciated the fact that our hospital is so open to praying for one another. Another time I had the nurse share with her patient that the chaplain was there once a week praying with nurses and she shared how much she appreciated those moments of prayer. Then when I went to visit the patient, the patient shared with me the nurses' excitement and she asked me to pray with her also. This particular patient said that she has never heard of a nurse being so happy and excited about the chaplain providing such great support for the nurses. My usual reply to these great responses is that we are a family in the hospital and we support and care for one another.

We also provide blessing of hands and invited the nurses to come and participate by having us pray over their hands as they work hard to care for the patients. We began the blessing of the hands on April 30. Many of the nurses really appreciated the opportunity to ask God's blessing upon their hands. May of the nurses showed their appreciation with tears in their eyes as they thanked me for taking the to bless their hands. We often ended the short prayer of the blessing of the hands with a smile and a warm hug. I've come to realize that it means a lot for most of the nurses to have their names

mentioned in prayer, and have their special hands prayed over. I would make sure to mention in prayer how grateful we are that they are nurses at SV and how much we appreciate their gifts and talents as they care for the patients. It becomes personal and very meaningful for them that we take the time to care. One nurse said that she felt God's presence after prayer, she turned around and told the others that were waiting in line, "I felt God's presence." No doubt God touched her life through the blessing of her hands and it was very powerful to be part of that experience! Times like these have given me the assurance of God's presence and leading in my calling and ministry. And I give God the glory for being present and making His presence felt in such powerful ways.

As I was reaching out to nurses in that one unit each of these ways mentioned, I had one of the managers from another unit ask me to come to her unit and teach her nurses how to pray with their patients. Just because she saw how the positive energy was poured out to this particular unit she wanted something for her nurses also. I went to one of their meetings, brought donuts for them, connected with the nurses by sharing about prayer, and gave them a prayer cheat sheet that they could carry in their badge in order to pray with the patients. I provided a sample prayer that they could carry with them because the manager had expressed the fact that many nurses would like to pray for their patients but do not know how.

By sharing with them about prayer, how to prayer and leaving a sample prayer with them gave the nurses courage and opportunity to pray with the patients they cared for. I really loved the fact that I had the opportunity to minister openly to the nurses, that they were very receptive to learning how to pray. Of course, I think it helped that I brought some donuts with me to show how much I cared for them.

We had the opportunity to get a cart as planned, to put goodies in the cart and pass out the goodies in the particular unit mentioned earlier. The administration granted us an unused "crash cart" that was not being used and we took it and we had it painted gray for us so it's not the same as the crash carts in the hospitals that are usually used for emergency incidents. The administration was also open about us ordering these items for this project. Because the administration wanted us to show care and support for the staff, and the idea was received well by administration, they were gracious to give a trial period for the project.

I started the cart with having it decorated with some beautiful wrapping paper. The drawers and the top of the cart were decorated to look nice and pretty with different soft colors. In each drawer I put different items as well as flowers on the cart. I purchased magnet cards with a Bible verse on it so the nurses can have them on their lockers or at home. We also had stress balls, pocket notepads that had an inspirational saying, chap sticks, candy, or other times as fruit and pens with our contact information on it. I added a photo below in order to have some visualization of the cart.

Figure 1. Cart.

I would go on the assigned unit, and as I would walk by, I would talk to the nurses and the staff and let them choose some goodies from the cart, telling them how much we appreciate them, acknowledge their hard work. I would take the time to ask them how their day was, how their family was, and how their weekend was. And if they had kids, I would ask about their kids or ask if they had any upcoming plans. Then I would encourage them in ways I saw fit, based on the conversation that we had. I would always try to end the conversation on a positive and hopeful note, cherishing those one-on-one conversations.

I really enjoyed this part of the project and thought that it was a great idea however it took a lot of time and energy for me to spend time one-on-one listening and sharing with each nurse. And when I ran out of the goodies, we also ran out of the funds to purchase more stuff to hand out. But it was a good way to develop those relationships and provide intentional support for the nurses. While it was a blessing to visit with the nurses, it did take time away from seeing every patient that I wanted to see. But I don't regret the investment of time, money, and energy in building those relationships with the nurses. It was a great opportunity to start coaching the nurses in different aspect of their life and work. Now we have a strong foundation for our working relationship through which I may continue to coach the nurses, for they trust me. Those conversations were prayed over and geared towards positive outlooks. There were many encouragements that took place on that unit over the six weeks that have helped tremendously to build strong relationships.

Our volunteer coordinator arranged to have neck warmers for this project. However, they did not come on time and only a few have been made so far. The idea

regarding the neck warmers did not materialize as I had hoped. They came shortly after I was complete with the program but I still decided to continue giving them out and using them for the staff. I was able to connect with the manager of the unit and let her know that these back and neck warmers are for the staff's wellness and we want them to continue thinking about self care and that we continue to care for them. To my surprise we started with one and the following week we had four requests given to me and to the manager, mainly those that we having back issues or neck pain. They were being requested and desired very quickly because I came to find out that many nurses are suffering either neck tensions or back pain from being on their feet for long hours.

We were able to give them out quickly, within two weeks we were able to give out 15 of them and more requests were coming in and there was a waiting list. The nurses were so happy that we were able to do this special gift with them in mind. They loved it. One staff had tears when I gave it to her and let her know how much we cared for her wellbeing. The cart was so successful that our sister hospital, the Kettering Medical Center adopted the idea of the cart for their nurses. Until this day, one of the chaplains at the Kettering Medical Center still continues to take a cart around to give goodies, encouragement, and intentional support for the nurses.

We have another cart that we named the "tea cart," comes with a Keurig machine for coffee and different type of teas, a card with uplifting words, cookies or fruits that I delivered to this unit when I heard that they had a hard, emotional day. It's a special way to give them a break and a little pick-me-up.

I also offered raffle tickets to win prizes like a movie basket, or gift cards to a restaurant for two. I got a jar with skittles and had them guess how many skittles were in

the jar. And the person with the closest number would be the winner of the prize. It was amazing to see the excitement around the basket in the break room. Everyone came with pens and in line to put their names for the basket. There was lots of laughter and joking around about who would win and what movies they would watch. This was another opportunity for me to get acquainted with some of the nurses that I didn't know that well. It was to get acquainted in a cheery, happy, and joyful way where we could laugh together and joke together.

In the movie basket I had a twenty-five dollars gift card and four tickets for a movie that I purchased and decorated. Everyone was so anxious to see who will win. I came back at four o'clock for the name drawing and a nurse assistant won the basket and everyone was so happy for her and literally cheered for her. After the drawing, I brought skittles for everyone to enjoy. Afterward, someone in the room mentioned that they are glad that this specific individual won because she really needed it, all week she had a hard week and this was an excellent way to cheer her up. I fully believe that God knew who needed some cheering up and joy and that God would be involved even in a prize drawing to bring joy to the person who needed it so much. I followed up with her the following week to see if she had a chance to use it in order to take the needed break. She told me that, she enjoyed the gift very much and she took her kids for a nice meal and a movie. It was something that she never could do before and expressed such deep gratitude and appreciation.

From that experience we had a strong relationship built between us. She is the one that would say positive things to her patients about the chaplain. From that one positive moment, she really felt comfortable calling for me to visit her patients that she felt could

use encouragement and prayer. I wish that we could have done more things like these to interacting with the staff in fun ways, for it helps build trust in the long run.

I also felt that our staff craved for deeper spiritual nourishment than just a prayer and blessing of hands. So I have decided to start a weekly chapel called "Pause for Prayer." The administration loved the idea and together with the administration we decided to name it "Pause for Prayer." Now every Tuesday, at nine-thirty in the morning, we have interested staff joining us for this special time where we gather together and read a scripture or an encouraging story. We also take time to accept prayer requests and pray together in a circle. The new chapel of the hospital is not set up with chairs facing a certain direction, but the chapel has sofas set up against the walls, so we just come together in a circle in the middle of the chapel for Scripture and prayer. I actually like this set up better because it brings us closer to each other and creates more personal space.

"Pause for Prayer" brings together the other staff that are on the same unit and others that are able to leave their station, like the assistant nurse, environmental services, managers, physical therapists, volunteers, registration and other nurses when they can get away. I felt that this was needed for the other staff as well, that they also may be enriched spiritually. Since our nurses are well taking care of, I also wanted to have the others also involved a bit. I received much feedback regarding "Pause for Prayer" that it was very helpful to those that attended. The staff really enjoy gathering together every Tuesday. They see worth and value in the time together and find it refreshing to the soul. During the feedback it was mentioned that they feel like a family coming together and praying for each other. There are times as we pray in the circle holding hands together and the sun shines through the glass roof, the participants felt the warmth and God's presence.

Another additional thing that was added as part of this project to support and care for the nurses was hosting our annual National Day of Prayer. This year we took the opportunity to nominate a nurse from this unit that went above and beyond in compassion and love towards her patients, in praying, offering spiritual and emotional support. The award was meant to be given to one who places patients' needs first, showing concern and providing wonderful patient care. An individual with a good attitude that is contagious and is passed on to others in the unit. We presented her with a nice plaque that had her name on it, and presented her a self-care basket that had a stay home movie night so she could at relax home with her family. This was such an amazing experience because the nurse did not expect the award, she was thoroughly surprised because the manager and the coordinator of the unit did an amazing job surprising her. On the day of the celebration, it was her day off but she was asked to come in to work for a celebration. As she stepped in the room and saw her family all present, she definitely looked puzzled, wondering why they were there. It was so amazing to see her surprised, to see her family supporting her in such a wonderful way. They were all taking photos together, eating together with lots of joy and laughter. You could see the joyful smiles on their faces. I could see that the nurse appreciated the award and the support. It made a huge impact on her. She is more open in her conversations with me and sends more referrals to my office entrusting me to visit her patients.

The six weeks of the project was filled with the hard work of caring for and supporting the nurses. Even though the six weeks was full of hard work, it was worth it because I gained such in-depth understanding of all that our hospital staff is going through both at work and at home. I was able to connect with the nurses, build

relationships that are still growing even more, be able to make staff happy in their work place so they can look forward to coming to work. I was able to provide intentional chaplain coaching that otherwise would not have taken place. My office was constantly busy and I was constantly on the floors interacting with staff by bringing pizza, or homemade cookies; as well as other interactive ways that was mentioned earlier, to provide support for the nurses and staff. Through this experience, the trust between the spiritual care department and the nurses grew, and we received many more referrals, or as we call them, consults for the chaplain to come and visit patients that the nurses cared for. I had a call from one of my peers from a sister hospital, all surprised asking me what I am doing different because my consults per week went up, scores also went up. He said that he will try to implement some things but not willing to pay for anything out of his pocket. I was fortunate to be able to have some funds from the administrators and the rest of the cost of the project came out of my pocket. However as much as I love doing baskets, with dinner and a movie gift cards, bring pizza, make cookies, I would not be able to continue providing these gifts and snacks out of my pocket. This project is very beneficial to show support and build relationships but it can cost an individual if the hospital does not have the funds. I sure saw the benefits; many expressed how the intentional chaplain coaching was helpful for them and how the prizes were fun.

In this project I was able to collaborate with the manager and the coordinator to see what other things we can do to help the staff with support and increase our patient scores. I came to find out also that the manager started doing daily rounds for the patients and taking the time and talking to them, being visible on the units more two weeks prior

to this project being started. As we all looked at the scores we saw that there were significant increase in the numbers in some categories.

Figure 2. Scores from the Survey.

Categories	**February, 2018**	**May, 2018**
Communication with nurses	81%	99%
Nurses treat with courtesy	76%	99%
Nurses listen carefully	94%	99%
Nurses explain in way you can understand	52%	99%
Response of hospital staff	5%	99%
Call button help	81%	99%
Help toileting as soon as needed	1%	99%

The coordinator gave me these scores and went over them with me, explaining them that there is proof from the scores that the project helped the nurses and staff tremendously. The scores showed that there was positive change at work since the chaplain provided intentional care and support. She was excited to tell me that those numbers were never that high and there are some significant changes that she was seeing now. My last closing surveyors were verbal ones from all the staff that were engaged in these activities and I asked them how the project helped them and how such support could help in the future. They stated that it really helped them to know that there is such service from the chaplain's office that pours out such great support, positivity, and energy. Of course now I feel bad that I cannot continue the project with such high energy but I

did let them know that this was a six-week program to see how it would go and that we would adjust and make changes after the project was over.

For my conclusion I interviewed each nurse personally and here are their responses:

- Nurse 1 - "That is was the best think one can do for the staff, it feels like someone actually cares and goes the extra mile."
- Nurse 2 – "Mariya, you have no idea how this has impacted our staff, it is a wonderful thing what you have extended. We appreciated the last six weeks. Every time I saw you, brought smile to my face."
- Nurse3 – "We never had a chaplain that went above and beyond for us to even bring cute things for us and of course the food is always a hit."
- Nurse 4 – "The thought what it counts. I appreciate the tickets you gave me on the drawing we had. I was able to take my kids on a movie night and be together for dinner out since we never can get away because I can't afford to them out for dinner and a movie. Thank you again for such a fun day you made for me and gave me what I needed that week for my family."
- Nurse 5 – "I love that you take the time and stop for conversations and prayer in the halls I never knew that chaplains are here for the staff as much as for the patients and families. Thank you for always praying with me and asking me how I'm doing."
- Nurse 6 – "Thank you for making intentional and praying for my husband he is feeling so much better now, appreciate you and what you do for us here. Your prayers and encouragement helped a lot."

- Nurse 7 – "Mariya, my staff are very appreciative of the back and neck warm -ups. They enjoy the fact that they can warm it up and use it for their back or neck and they feel pain/soar. More of them are asking for those and so far, I have 6 requests asking for the wraps. They complain a lot about their back, being on their feet for long hours and tens in front of the computer. Thank you they really appreciate it and are very happy for this gift."
- Nurse 8 – "You have no ideas how much this meant to me you giving me the neck wrap for my back. It meant a lot to me and it helps so much. I relax after work on the sofa and just think of nothing. I didn't have one and I didn't even think to take care of myself in this way. The doctor kept telling me to place heat on my back and my shoulder but never was able to think of something like this to find for heat up. And I could not afford looking into it when I thought of something." She had tears in her eyes, gave me a big hug, and said, "thank you so much for caring, Mariya."
- Nurse 9 – "We really appreciate all that you do it really gives us something to look forward when we come to work. It's these fun activities that gets me going at work and you bringing those gifts and drawings made it fun for us. We had a good time ad it didn't matter who won we just had a blast. I know that my peers really enjoyed all that you did. You are such an awesome chaplain! We never had such a chaplain here at SV that is paying attention to the staff. Thank you so much!"

- Nurse 10 – "Thank you so much for doing all these kind gestures for us and making it so special. I appreciate you being here at SV and I hope that you do not leave this place any time soon."
- Nurse11 – "Thank you for all that you do Mariya, so much appreciate that time we have together for 'one min with Mariya.' We have never had anyone come to us and pray at the nursing stations. It makes it so special!"

Conclusion

I shared this amazing experience with the Vice President of Spiritual Care and sent him a photo of the cart. He was very impressed and sent it to all the network chaplains that I interact with and he encouraged them to do some similar ideas in their own hospitals. One of our campus hospitals started the same idea with the cart and the chaplain got started being intentional with the staff in the same way through giving and providing the same idea in the project. One advice on how this project could work better in the hospitals would be having an assistant chaplain or a second staff chaplain because it will help them to split the work load for the entire hospital. Perhaps one chaplain that day could focus on seeing patients and one could go on rounds to visit with the staff in need. However, it is not always possible to have two chaplains working together, so it is important that the chaplain not try to do it all by themselves, both supporting the staff and nurses and visiting the patients. Chaplains should not burn out by adding more to their hectic workload. Perhaps half a day could be spent with patients and half a day with the staff, this is what my goal was as I was going through the project. It worked, but at the end of the day it places the chaplain in a very exhausting emotional state.

By doing this project in the hospital for one specific unit is hard because the word goes out to other staff and they wonder why none of these are happening in their unit also. Since I heard some staff question on different occasions why I did not go to their unit, I did make efforts at least once a week to visit all the units with cookies and with my special cart. The cart was not received as well in the other units, because I did not have the time to build relationships with them first as I did with the unit for this project. So instead of the cart, once in a while I just took trays with snacks and talked with the staff in the break rooms.

I also tried to do this for the night staff but it was not as receptive as my unit again, because the day shift on the same unit was able to see me more and we were used to praying together, talking together, and connecting better because of the six-week project. But because the night shift was not connected with me as the chaplain, bringing them food and trying to connect with them was awkward. They didn't understand why the chaplain would come in the evening and bring them food and snacks. Unfortunately, I was not able to build connections with the night staff, the project worked only with the day shift and the unit with which I had built the relationship for the six weeks. Now if I would have been a night shift chaplain, I am sure that over time it would have worked in the evening also. I am very grateful that we had the positive results, and the results were better than anticipated. I would definitely do the project again if the funds were available. I love my staff and it was worth making these efforts to try to get to know them and support them in any way possible. They work so hard caring for the caretakers and least that much we can do to acknowledge them to support them and let them know that they are not alone. Provide that coaching in our daily interactions and conversations,

encourage them, pray for them, help their emotional beings so they can have the strength for the day. Because nurses give so much as care givers and in return they do not receive affirmation from anyone in the work place, I believe that it is the privilege of the spiritual department to support and make a difference in the lives of the nurses and staff.

After completing this project I was able to see results, we increased our patient's scores, the moral within the unit was improved, there were smiles on the halls, and many intentional relationships were made through coaching and mentoring. I was able to see results as I supported each nurse, they came to me for advice, prayers, and constant support. They expressed trust every time they opened up about their personal struggles. And I had the opportunity to pour encouragement, hope, and help on a deeper level. Also the turnover numbers for our staff shows that we had excellent results after the project. I included in appendix C the results of the nurses turnover by month for the year of 2018. What is astounding about the graph is that we had turnovers every month for the year, but there were zero turnovers for the months of May, June, and July. We started the project at the end of April and it seems to have had effects until July, for no nurse left the unit until August. To me this speaks a lot that this project made a positive impact on them as we worked towards this goal to encourage them and support them so they can build a good team with less burnout and less turnovers in our staff. I see great value then in supporting our nurses, for nurses will want to stay in an environment where they are encouraged and supported.

In desiring to lower the high turnovers in our staff, we need to be the strong support that they will look forward to in enjoying a pleasant work environment. A place that they can call home with much laughter and joy in the midst of their own suffering as

well as caring for those who are suffering. We need to be there by their side to uplift them and walk with them through their own personal journey. This will increase our patients scores of satisfaction and in return we will have good quality care for our patients and a healthy staff that would always like to go above and beyond in everything they do.

APPENDIX A

QUESTION AND ANSWERS OF THE BEGINNING SURVEY

The First Survey

1. In your care for patients, do you feel at times overwhelmed, emotionally drained, stressed or frustrated? [y/n, maybe, not sure]
2. Do you see the spiritual care as a department who can bring you encouragement and support? [y/n, maybe, not sure]
3. How can we help you through your busy schedule? Give ideas? What can we provide for you at this time to help you with your day?
4. Would self-care packages be helpful?
   (Would soothing lotions, bath balm, movie tickets, concert tickets, lunch, stress relieve conversation with chaplain be of any help for you?) [y/n, maybe, not sure]
5. Would food/snacks once a week be making a difference for your day? [y/n, maybe, not sure]
6. Would intentional one-on-one time with your chaplain be helpful for your day? [y/n, maybe, not sure]

Results of the Beginning Survey

1. In your care for patients, do you feel at times overwhelmed, emotionally drained, stressed or frustrated? [y/n, maybe, not sure]
   a. Ten Nurses chose "yes" and two wrote in responses. One nurse wrote, "sometimes." The second nurse wrote, "nursing can be emotional at times."
2. Do you see the spiritual care as a department who can bring you encouragement and support? [y/n, maybe, not sure]
   a. Thirteen nurses chose "yes." Three nurses chose, "maybe." And one nurse commented that "every day someone comes to see us in the ICU."
3. How can we help you through your busy schedule? Give ideas? What can we provide for you at this time to help you with your day?
   a. Some of the nurses did not respond to this question but the following nurses wrote the following. Nurse one wrote, "Prayer always makes a difference; I appreciate that you folks are there for us, even though I don't always get to talk to you."
   b. Nurse two wrote, "offer prayer, food/drinks."
   c. Nurse five wrote, "Just continue to pray for our safety, patience, and empathy as we care for our patients and ourselves."
   d. Nurse six wrote, "prayer."
   e. Nurse seven wrote, "I love having a moment of prayer."
   f. Nurse ten wrote, "pray for us."
   g. Nurse eleven wrote, "leave encouraging Bible verses."

h. Nurse thirteen wrote, "continue to help with patients who are grieving an illness and their families."

i. Nurse fourteen wrote, "always wonderful to have someone there just to ask how we are doing and smile."

j. Nurse fifteen wrote, "blessings of hands, pray for patients/caregivers. Bring communion/daily rounding to check on stress level of staff."

4. Would self-care packages be helpful?

(Would soothing lotions, bath balm, movie tickets, concert tickets, lunch, stress relieve conversation with chaplain be of any help for you?) [y/n, maybe, not sure]

a. Twelve nurses circled "yes," and three nurses circled "maybe."

b. A couple of nurses left some notes:

i. Nurse one wrote "all of the above; anything to perk us up during the work day; I'm always in need of lotion!"

ii. Nurse three wrote, "food."

iii. Nurse seven wrote, "All of the above sounds amazing."

iv. Nurse nine wrote, "I think a little pampering makes everyone feel better."

v. Nurse eleven wrote, "all the above listed ideas."

vi. Nurse fifteen wrote, "soothing hand lotions."

5. Would food/snacks once a week be making a difference for your day? [y/n, maybe, not sure]

a. Thirteen nurses circled "yes," two nurses circled "no," and one nurse circled "no." In fact nurse seven stated on the survey that "nurses love food!" Nurse nine wrote, "yes, sometimes people are so busy they only have time to snack." Nurse eleven wrote, "food makes me happy." And nurse twelve wrote, "it might be something to cheer everyone up!"

6. Would intentional one-on-one time with your chaplain be helpful for your day? [y/n, maybe, not sure]

a. Seven nurses circled "yes." Eight nurses circled "maybe." One nurse circled "no."

APPENDIX B

CART

APPENDIX C

NURSES TURNOVER RESULTS

Month Name	Sum of Begin Headcount	Sum of New Hires	Sum of Terminations	Sum of End Headcount	Average Headcount
2018 - 01 - January	68	3	5	66	67
2018 - 02 - February	66	5	1	70	68
2018 - 03 - March	70	3	3	70	70
2018 - 04 - April	70	5	2	73	72
2018 - 05 - May	73	0	0	73	73
2018 - 06 - June	73	2	0	75	74
2018 - 07 - July	75	4	0	79	77
2018 - 08 - August	79	2	2	79	79
2018 - 09 - September	79	2	1	80	80
2018 - 10 - October	80	0	2	78	79
2018 - 11 - November	78	0	2	76	77
2018 - 12 - December	76	4	0	80	78
Avg Headcount	74	3	2	75	
Cumulative New Hire Headcount		**30**			
Cumulative Terminated Headcount			**18**		
R12M Average Headcount					**74**
Turnover (%)					**24.2%**

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